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BOOK MAY BE KEPT FOUR WEEKS

MY EXPERIENCES

OF THE

WAR BETWEEN FRANCE AND GERMANY.

VOL. I.

"News of battle! News of battle!
Hark! 'tis ringing down the street;
And the archways and the pavement
Bear the clang of hurrying feet.
News of battle! Who has brought it?"

W. E. Aytoun, *Lays of the Scottish Cavaliers.*

Stockton, Calif.

June 1871.

MY EXPERIENCES OF THE WAR

BETWEEN

FRANCE AND GERMANY.

BY

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ONE OF THE SPECIAL CORRESPONDENTS OF "THE DAILY NEWS."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

HURST AND BLACKETT, PUBLISHERS,

13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1871.

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St. Pub. Lib.

LONDON:
BRADBURY, EVANS, AND CO., PRINTERS, WHITEFRIARS.

68156
DEC 3 1 1952

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v.1

A11-1579
12/52

PREFACE.

It is right to state that a large proportion of the material of these two volumes consists of letters contributed to "The Daily News," so far as concerns the events written of in Parts II., III., and IV.; to "The Morning Advertiser," as regards Part I. I have modified, excised, and re-written not a little, only to find the desire, which cannot be gratified, grow stronger and stronger to re-write the whole. As it is, what follows can claim to be no more than an honest narrative of events which passed within my own ken; nor did I allow any consideration to deter me from bringing as many events as possible within my ken. Yet even of these the book makes no pretensions to be a historical record; but it may be of some service to the historian which the late war is sure to evoke.

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PART I.

THE STROKES OF THE SLEDGE-HAMMER.

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MY EXPERIENCES

OF THE

WAR BETWEEN FRANCE & GERMANY.

CHAPTER I.

THE EARLY DAYS.

He must have lived in some very sequestered vale indeed who did not in some measure participate in the thrill of excitement which ran through Britain on that day, the 15th of July, 1870, on which the Duc de Grammont in his master's name proclaimed that France had resolved to make war with Prussia. The general impression probably was, that there would be a pitched battle the same evening, and when day after day passed and no overt warfare was reported of a more serious character than the blowing-up of a bridge, the capture of a couple of douaniers, or the harmless exchange of shots between the hostile pickets and patrols on the frontier line, the intensity of the concentrated expectancy only grew keener because of the lurid hush that preceded the

breaking of the storm. In these early days, while access was possible to the vicinity of the frontier line—on the German side at least—there was little of interest to attract anyone whose mission it was to contribute what he might toward feeding the popular appetite with what has come to be known ever since the Crimean times as "War Correspondence." But there was no lack in Germany of more interesting work than competing with Reuter in the transmission of telegrams, or in gazing continuously across the boundary line through a field-glass on the chance of seeing a few brisk little men in red breeches popping out and in among the trees. One might see with his own eyes the working of that huge machine, on the elaboration of every cog and pinion of which Von Moltke and his subordinates had bestowed so much pains. The word had gone forth for the mobilisation of the German army a few days before I reached Cologne, on the 19th July. Already, before leaving London, I had noticed and wondered what a power and scope had this machine—the German military system—that it could bridge the Channel and sweep into its feeder with a suction-power not to be resisted, Germans long resident in Britain, and unthirled from the machine save by the astriction of patriotism. There was little need in these days of July to ask one's way to the office of the North German Consul in the city. You knew you were coming to the Consulate before you got within

sight of it. The pavements were thronged by Germans who monopolised the "crown of the causeway" with a stolid masterful good humour which was not to be gainsaid. You might have walked over the heads of the densely-packed mass of men who stood about wedged in, chatting, smoking, spitting, grumbling occasionally—not viciously—at the delay they experienced in getting their passports put in order. I should think at least three hundred Germans were in waiting for their passports when I procured my *visa*. Four-fifths of the men —for the most part stalwart, lissom young fellows— were starting to join the German army. There was no compulsion on them, save what we might call moral compulsion. They might have become naturalised Englishmen on their arrival among us, or at all events when they found themselves beginning to have a stake in the country. But Fatherland was their all-in-all. They had thrown up, not a few of them, positions of high trust and considerable emolument, that they might return to serve in its ranks as private soldiers. Nor was there any impulsive, thoughtless recklessness in the step. On the contrary, many of them regretted, in my hearing, that prospects so good should thus be thrown to the winds; but in this regret was not mingled a tinge of recalcitrancy. It seemed as if they had never so much as let the consciousness dawn upon them that it was possible to draw back. What they were doing was a

simple matter of inevitable duty. And it appeared to me that it was in true consistency that there should have been but little display of enthusiasm. They seemed to know each that his neighbour was genuine, without bursting out into spasmodic professions of devotion and mutual exhortations savouring of "high-falutin." Several policemen were among the number, and I was sorry to find—while the *employés* of private persons had not only been treated liberally as regarded the present, but in many cases, on the part both of English and foreign houses, had been promised favourable consideration on their return to claim their hurriedly-vacated situations—that the public servants had been very scurvily dealt with. One policeman, who was a third-class constable, notwithstanding that he spoke four languages, and saved the force the cost of an interpreter, had been suspended summarily immediately on his intimating that duty to his native country compelled him to quit the police; had been deprived of his uniform without a moment's warning, and in a contumelious manner; had been refused any testimonial as to character, and finally was about to leave England, leaving behind a week's wages which were owing to him, and payment of which was withheld. It was not a time favourable for the voyaging of the migratory Britons, who are wont to crowd the Channel boats in the later summer months. Such of our countrymen as were to be found on foreign

shores were for the most part hurriedly betaking themselves to their insular fatherland to be out of harm's way and the evil days that were dreaded; and if perchance you encountered a few with their faces turned the other way, those faces were set and anxious, for their owners were hurrying to bring home children or relatives from school or residence in some German town—peaceable enough still, but ere long, it might be, to be the scene of a battle and the victim of a hostile occupation. But the Ostend boats, for a few weeks at all events in the beginning of the war, did not miss the suspension of the tourist exodus. There was hardly standing room on their decks, thronged as they were by Germans crowding home to swell the great national army. The night I crossed I had a talk with two men who had come all the way home from New York for this purpose, having started as soon as the first tidings of a probable rupture crossed the Atlantic, and they assured me that they would be speedily followed by vast numbers. What an extraordinary compound were they of Germano-Yankee financial 'cuteness and pure single-hearted patriotic zeal! Long and regretfully did they discourse about the ill-effects of the war-panic; how this security went down seven per cent., and that ten. But their quiet, contented conclusion was, "Never mind, Germany will conquer, and what for that is the money?" No German seemed to doubt that Germany would ultimately conquer;

but there were few who had not made up their minds to lose a battle or two at the outset, and that for sure the opening scene at least of the stupendous drama would be played within the borders of their native land. How the world halted between two opinions till Wörth and Spicheren gave data not to be resisted, seems strange and half unreal now when we have so long stood in the full light of after-experience.

When I reached Cologne on the 19th July, working parties had already begun to fell the trees on the ramparts and to face up the scarps of the outlying forts. A state of siege had been formally declared, so that the place might be got in trim for an actual siege if the fortune of war and the traditional dash of the French should bring the crest of the wave to lap against the hoary fortifications of the ancient Rhineland city. And then, too, not in the city alone, but in every village and parish throughout the length and breadth of the land, the great mobilisation machine—Gneisenau's patent, with improvements by Von Moltke—was in full swing. How this machine does its work it is not easy to realise, unless one has actually watched its operation. To do this I halted for a few days, taking Cologne as headquarters, and made daily excursions into the neighbouring country where the mobilisation machine was in operation. What I saw left me divided between admiration of its quiet regularity and its

surprising efficiency; and a feeling of sadness which no man with any feeling could escape. While the Uhlan patrols and the Chasseurs-à-cheval are looking at each other across the frontier, a short description of the working of the mobilisation machine may not be uninteresting.

It is unnecessary to waste space in describing in detail the Prussian military system, now adopted by all the German States. If there are those among my readers who are not, by this time, familiar with these details, it may be taken as pretty certain that such would obdurately skip a paragraph furnishing them now. All that seems necessary is to point out that there are three strata of fighting men in Germany—the regular army, the "reserve," and the landwehr. It is a mistake into which many fall, and among others the *Times* in a leading article in the earlier days of the campaign, that the reserve is "in the rear of the regular army." This is not the case. The war strength of a regiment is just double its peace strength, and the increment consists of the reserve. The blending of the two in time of war is thorough and complete. The medalled men of 1866, and of the Sleswig-Holstein campaigns, called up from reserve, are welded into the same ranks with the young soldiers who are serving their first period of three years. Bayonet for bayonet, the old and the young soldiers balance each other, and the amalgamation is perfect

between dash and steadiness—between whatever recklessness there may be in the bravery of youth, and the staid valour of maturer years. It is an utter mistake to think of the Prussian army or the Prussian reserves, as a militia similar to our highly estimable but rather weak-kneed "constitutional force." The British militiaman has, in very few instances, been a soldier otherwise than in the militia. He is quite a militia veteran, if he has gone through his month's drill once a year for four or five years, and he is not liable to serve abroad. The Prussian reserve man, in whatever stratum he may be, can point backward to three full years spent in active soldiering with the colours of his regiment. He has his drill every year, like our respected militiaman, but he is liable for foreign service, and that, too, even after he is out of the "reserve," and in the ranks of the landwehr.

The mobilisation machine grinds its grinding in this wise. The whole country is divided into districts, in the central city of each of which are the head-quarters of the army corps recruited from that district. Thence is sent forth the edict for mobilisation to the towns, the villages, and the quiet country parishes. The authorities there make out individual summonses, appointing day and place for the gathering, and these are left at the "respective places of abode" of the reserve men. Max has married, and children have begun to toddle around his modest table. He is in the midst of his harvest, and

Gretchen is daily expected to add to the population of the Fatherland. Carl is to be married next week; he has bought his humble plenishing, and the priest or the minister has been spoken to. Hans is just entering into partnership; he has built new premises, and his presence may be essential to make the spoon—his absence will spoil the horn. Heinrich is on the eve of emigrating. His traps are bought, and his ticket is paid for. But the burgomaster's clerk, or the orderly corporal, comes round one pleasant summer evening, and serves on one and all a certain bit of paper. Max, when he reads it, growls "Donner wetter," and actually lets his pipe out in the dismal pause that follows its perusal. Carl walks off with it to his sweetheart, and there is a blubbering match. But when the appointed day arrives, Max and all the rest of them come to the front—genuine children of the Fatherland. Max leaves the harvest *in statu quo*, kisses his Gretchen, and wishes her well through her trouble, slobbers the bairns, and strides off to the muster—the wallet on his shoulder, into which Gretchen has crammed a couple of shirts, a lump of *schwartz brod*, a few slices of *schinken*, and a coil of fearfully and wonderfully made sausages—a little unaccustomed water in his eye, and a queer lump in his bare brown throat. Carl puts off his wedding indefinitely, and war becomes his mistress, *vice* the other *fräulein*, superseded for the time being. Heinrich postpones expatriation, perhaps to

enrich the soil of France with certain phosphates, the product of the decomposition of bones. Hans leaves the new business and partner (an "exempt" let one hope) to take their course; he for the time has other fish to fry. The contingent of the village, duly called over and found complete, is sent off towards head-quarters. By the way it meets other contingents, till finally, as the rendezvous is reached, the several contingents make quite a procession in traversing the streets. Now, it can be recognised what a pure democracy, in a social sense, is the Prussian army. In the same file walk the labouring man and his master's son, the farmer's boy and the banker's clerk. And if you follow them till they have got their uniform, it is likely enough that you will find the labouring man, who already has his medals on his breast, wearing the gold stripes round his throat, and the petty centurion over his quondam superior, to whom he sayeth, "Do this," and he doeth it.

One is able also to recognise in this procession the genuine military experience of Prussia. Many of its members look louts—they drag their legs as if they had never been an hour at the goose step, and their shoulders are as round as if they had never learned the meaning of suppling motions. One of our smart sergeants of Charles Street would emphatically d——n the lot all round as "heart-breaks." But the heart-breaks have seen and done what, in all probability, the recruiting-

sergeant has only a very faint conception of. They have seen and shared in the shock of battle—they are veterans. Two-thirds of the number wear the war-medals of former campaigns. Max was at the storming of the Dannewerk; Heinrich plied the needle-gun at Königgratz. Let us follow the party to the arsenal. On the road there is not a drunken man to be seen, and there is no need of carts or ambulances to carry the weary and footsore, for there are none such. "Falling out" is a trick that the Prussian reserve men do not seem to have learned. At the arsenal they get their uniforms, and on the peg whence each military suit is taken, is hung up the civilian raiment, there to await its owner on the return of peace. If the unclaimed personal flotsam and jetsam is a perquisite of King Wilhelm, the worthy old-clo' men of the Juden Strasse have had a fine harvest of it. For Gretchen may have been a widow before her baby was out of long clothes, and the priest may have never been called upon to marry Carl. The serving-out process is admirably systematic, betokening a state of active preparation highly creditable to the quartermaster's department. However, it takes the best part of a day ere the clodhopper of the morning is fully transformed into the soldier. And what a transformation is that effected by a spiked helmet, pair of breeches, and boots! The man is a different being now. The slouch has gone from his shoulders, his chest is

thrown forward, his legs straightened, his chin "well off the stock" (in military phrase), his step brisk, and his carriage altogether soldierlike. The associations of the uniform have done it all. And now, as these newly re-made soldiers crowd the streets, one can gauge their military physique with some precision. They are not trim, dapper men. The regimental tailor of a British crack regiment would have been in despair over the gaunt, long-thighed, big-jointed, thin-flanked fellows, all corners and muscle. But it is clear they are as tough as whip-cord, and strong, lasting, useful soldiers. Their sobriety and docility are simply astonishing. They go about the business of the hour as if they were working for their own hand; and now, in the evening, although the town is swarming with soldiers, it is as quiet as if there were not a man beyond the ordinary garrison. No piquets promenade the thoroughfares to pick drunken men out of the gutter, or to apprehend rioters; the barrack-gates are not infested by hordes of soldiers' women, and are not the theatres of scenes calculated to make decent people shun the vicinity. All is orderly, decent, and reputable.

We have an impression among us—and I confess I shared it—that he makes the best soldier who is the most of an *enfant perdu*. Cut your soldier off from all civil associations—no matter if from all associations of civilisation as well—make the army his trade, the

barrack-room his home, and alternate the canteen with the low public-house as his chosen haunt. Let every douce civilian body wag his head in a half-kindly, half-chiding way over the soldier, regard him as more or less God-forgotten, yet still a fine fellow in his way, and capital food for powder. Let the soldier accept this view of himself, drink his pay, wax his moustache, wink at the girls, and swagger about the world in peace time —and in war? Of course your reckless scapegrace, without a tie in the world, who carries his life in his hand, is just the man to make a dashing charge, to cover himself with glory, to start the bells a-ringing and the park guns a-firing, and—to drink himself to death with the multitudinous pots which a temporarily proud and grateful civilian population press upon his acceptance.

Why? Wherefore should a man fight any better because he is a disreputable scapegrace? You talk of a stake in the country having a tendency to stimulate patriotism in civil life. Why should the same cause not have the same effect in military? Whether do the "tears fall and blind" the soldier most, when the band strikes up "The girl I leave behind me," if she be an honest woman, a true wife, and the mother of his children, or some dirty garrison trull hardly troubling to see him off in her anxiety to make the acquaintance of his successor? In most of the printsellers' windows in London is an engraving representing a farewell between

an officer and his wife, as he quits for foreign service. I often appreciated the true sentiment of Millais' picture, yet never more so than during those early days when the mobilisation mill was grinding. The husband, leaning from a carriage window, stretches forth his hand, which the wife clasps in both of hers, gazing into his face in a speechless yearning agony of parting. I witnessed the scene, with variations, dozens of times in town and country Rhineland. Now it was a sun-burnt woman with tanned cheeks, and deeper tanned hands, grim, thin-cheeked, and angular-featured, who gripped the hand of a slightly greasy, equally brown man, in a blue slop, and boots suggestive of small boats. But the look out of the eyes was the same as in the picture; and the hussar officer had no fuller heart as the bell rang and the train started, than had the greasy *landmann* as he turned away with the broken muttered "Goot behüte Dich," and pulled his cap over his eyes for a spell before he re-lit his pipe. Did the *landmann* fight any the worse, think you, because he had left behind him in the village the sunburnt *frau* and their young ones, than would your dashing devil-may-care, who goes jauntily away to the war with a laugh and a jeer? I venture, for my part, to think not.

After a run to Frankfort-on-the-Main in connection with the great "legitimation" question, I set my face at length, on the 24th July, towards the frontier. France

was still unaccountably holding her hand, and every day Germany was breathing the freer, as the high-pressure mobilisation machine rapidly and efficiently overtook its work. Even pessimists dared to hope that the Turcos might not, after all, be quartered on them the day after but one; and the confidence was steadily gaining ground that the army to inaugurate invasion would consist not of Gauls but of Teutons. Men came to realise with flashing eyes and speech unwontedly excited, how the lean, silent man, in his bureau in Berlin, was fulfilling the engagement, which not a few thought an impossible boast unworthy of Von Moltke.

The 24th of July was among the last of the days for ordinary traffic on the Rhine Valley Railways, till the hosts had done passing on their way to battle. Mayence was quite on a war footing. Bingerbruck—the terminus of the line which quits the Rhenish system and runs up the Nahe, towards Saarbrück, was totally blocked for civilian passengers and given over to the transport of troops and munitions of war. With a permission from General Von Göben, commanding the 8th Army Corps, I found no difficulty in travelling by the military trains, and capital fun it was. I went up the Nahe in a long Noah's ark style of railway waggon, in one corner of which I found sitting room on my knapsack; and my fellow-passengers were thirty-nine men of one of the regiments of the Prussian Guard. Better fellows there

could not be—all civil, jolly, and well bred. The sergeant of the squad was a medical student, who had temporarily given up learning how to cure, to betake himself to the practice of the art of killing, and several of his comrades were the sons of merchants. As the train jogged along at a very slow pace, for it had sixty carriages, and contained about two thousand men, the soldiers were vehemently cheered by the crowds collected at every station and every wayside village. Of course they cheered back again, the bugler or the drummer giving vent to his patriotic emotions on his instrument; while occasionally the spirit moved a grave young man—who looked as if he were doing chronic battle with a huge brazen serpent, but who was merely a trombonist or ophecleidist—to send a stave gurgling and throbbing through the many involutions of his fearful and wonderful instrument, that emerged at length from the big end in a deafening roar. We exchanged cigars. My soldier friends proffered me brown biscuits harder than the nether millstone, and seemed seriously hurt when I could not make an impression on them. Water-bottles, containing something that was not water, went the round; then came a song, something, of course, about the "Vaterland," and so we moved on merrily. Those water-bottles served out to the Prussian troops are very different to the horrible wooden tubs, with the inevitable leak, which British soldiers are condemned to carry, cursing them as

they go. They are flat glass flasks, securely covered with stiff leather, and have a screw stopper. No fall will break them; they are cooler than wood, and they lie conveniently on the side opposite the sword. It was at Kreuznach where we had the earliest opportunity of recognising a fact with which all the world is now familiar, the extraordinary marching power of the German troops. A battalion marched in during the evening, after a fifteen miles' tramp in heavy marching order, under an intensely hot sun, and the men wearing new boots. Powdered thick, as the sturdy square-built fellows were, it was plain they were good, if need were, for another fifteen miles. I saw a battalion in complete marching order come into Bingen the night before. It had marched about ten miles, and was, of course, powdered white with dust. The pace at which the battalion passed could have been but little short of four miles an hour. The men marched four abreast, with considerable intervals between the files, so that the air circulated freely. But there was no straggling all over the road; a single word of command would have sufficed to bring the battalion into regularity of formation; and, notwithstanding the length of the march, and the rate at which the ground was covered, only one man had been compelled to fall out.

I suppose it is petty well appreciated by this time everywhere, how much this remarkable power of the

Germans to march long distances quickly, and that for consecutive days, helped to win for them their victories. Yet, without having personally witnessed their endurance displayed, often under unfavourable conditions, it is difficult for one to believe in the possibility of the accomplishment of perfectly well authenticated feats. I have known men march thirty English miles a day for three consecutive days. It must be remembered, too, that when the day's march was over the troops had to do their fire-lighting and cooking, and, indeed, had occasionally to go some distance for the food to cook. Nor must it be forgotten that the German troops on the march almost invariably bivouac in the open. They carry no tents—an excellent arrangement in fine summer weather, when it is a positive pleasure to sleep "under the beautiful stars," but one that is very trying when the weather is broken and inclement. They carry burdens on the march much heavier than the kit of our English soldiers, and in the burning dog-days they plodded sturdily forward all day long, yet I only heard of a few cases of sunstroke. I attribute this exemption to the comparative sobriety of the German soldiery. It was not long ago—nor is the case an isolated one—that a loud clamour was raised in England because a regiment had been marched some distance in the sun with the result of several sunstrokes, one of which was fatal. Those who cried shame over the trifling Kings-

ton march should have seen the Germans striding steadily forward, the thermometer at eighty or eighty-five in the shade, with needle-gun, heavy knapsack, eighty rounds of ammunition, huge greatcoat, camp kettle, sword (a useless encumbrance), spade, water-bottle, haversack, and lots of odds and ends dangling about them, with perhaps a loaf, like a curling stone, under the arm, and without the remotest symptom of sunstroke. But then they had not been drunk with bad beer or worse spirits the night before, and it is this over-night intoxication to which, I think, inquiry would demonstrate that cases of sunstroke on the march are mostly attributable. So steady and unfluctuating are the marching pace and endurance of the German troops, that it must be a miscalculation on his own part if a leader is out in a reckoning having these conditions for its basis. The generals know what the men can do, and feel assured that they will do it; and this confidence enables them to devise strategical combinations in the full conviction, which is never falsified, that the troops will turn up at the appointed place true to time, and ready, too, for fighting, no matter how long and severe the road has been.

A day or two before our *Militär-zug* got to Kreuznach there had been a panic in that mildest of all German watering places, and the visitors had quitted hotels and lodging-houses with as much precipitation

as if the town had been warned that the fate of Gomorrah was to overtake it next day. Princesses—German—thankfully accepted places—not seats—in coal waggons; and duchesses—German also—prayed to be allowed to squeeze into the goods vans. But I met one sturdy Briton who, although his wife and children were with him, valiantly refused to quit. He had lived three years and more among the Germans, and from his experience of them was thoroughly convinced that Kreuznach was not to be violated by a French foot; so he was living on here contentedly, with all the healing waters in the baths to himself.

The Kreuznach arrangements for the comfort of the troops *in transitu* may be taken as an example of that which was in force during this period at every considerable railway station in Germany. The magistrates and leading citizens had formed themselves into a committee, and they and other townsmen provided as much good bread and meat and as much wholesome Rhine wine as the soldiers could conveniently stow away. As each train came up, the wine, mixed with water, went round in pails, the solid viands on huge trays. When a regiment halted long enough, it was marched into a large shed and liberally regaled.

Our *Militär-zug* stuck fast at Kreuznach on the morning of the 25th July, and nobody in authority seemed to have the faintest idea when it or another train would

proceed in the Saarbrück direction. When the evening came, and with it continued haziness on the part of the officials, I came to the resolution of walking to Kaiserslautern, a town on the Palatinate Railway, about midway between the Rhine at Speyer and Saarbrück, in the expectation of finding trains still running on the line between it and the latter place. Before I quitted Kreuznach three battalions of infantry and one regiment of cavalry had arrived by train, and commenced the march up the Nahe Valley by the road, taking billets for the first night, some in Kreuznach, others in the villages up the valley. The infantry battalions were composed of men of splendid physique, as became the "Queen's Guards;" the cavalry, which were dragoons, impressed me less favourably. It was surprising to find train after train discharging its contents at Kreuznach, instead of proceeding to a point much nearer the frontier; but the explanation indicated great sagacity. The infantry battalions comprised a large number of newly-mobilised men. A march was necessary to season these, and in fact the whole body, and to make the new boots fit easily and comfortably. A constant stream of troops was thus to continue pouring up the roads of the Nahe Valley; their concentration was easy at any given point: and, if need were, supports could have been expeditiously brought up the railway to unite with them. A very large army might in this way have been massed at any

point on the slope of the Saar water-shed, looking towards France, or on or inside the frontier itself, with a punctuality and precision impossible were the railway only to be resorted to. It may be mentioned that while this Nahe Valley itself is rugged and precipitous in the extreme, its right and left banks—the former looking towards Mayence, the latter towards Coblentz—form rather broad plateaus of favourable configuration for the march of troops, although obstructed and narrowed in places by forests. The railway runs almost in the river bed, and between Kirn and St. Wendel bores no fewer than twelve tunnels through the rocks. Preparations were in progress for facilitating the blowing up of these tunnels, it case it should have become necessary to make the railway useless.

All night long I trudged along the country roads in the direction of Kaiserslautern. After ten o'clock not a soul was to be seen, and I doubtfully held on the road, guided by the compass and by an occasional friendly finger-post. The road is fringed by frequent villages, but whether they were occupied by soldiers or not it was impossible to tell. As I progressed in the early morning, and presently approached Rockenhausen—a small town—rather more than half-way to Kaiserslautern—I found the country being gradually more and more densely billeted. At Rockenhausen my pedestrian powers gave out, and I had to drive for the remainder

of the journey, the troops becoming more plentiful as I proceeded, till at Kaiserslautern it seemed as if I had reached the head-quarters of a considerable army. There I found the railway, and a train which conveyed me first to Neunkirchen, where the Nahe Railway was rejoined, and thence down into Saarbrück. At Neunkirchen first became visible the earnest of actual warfare, in the shape of the well-known white flag with the red cross floating over occasional buildings along the line; but not a single soldier, far less an enemy, was to be seen. The children played merrily in the smiling villages as if the millennium had arrived; the smoke poured from the chimneys of the factories, and from the pit-heads on the grimy embankments the output of coal and iron was progressing as if France and Germany had sworn indissoluble brotherhood. When we reached Saarbrück we found the station crowded with nonchalant civilians, male and female. The streets wore the most everyday aspect; the shops were open, the working folks were strolling in from the townlands, and the young ladies daintily promenaded, exciting a flutter among the trim subalterns. A sentry on the door of the hotel inhabited by the military commandant, a little piquet of Uhlan lancers in a corner of the market-place, and the eloquent white flags constituted the few tokens of war visible.

Although the early operations of which Saarbrück formed the centre have been snuffed out by the stu-

pendous fighting to which they were merely the overture, yet they ought not to be without some little interest, if the analogy be followed that people are found listening to the overture without impatience. This summer, doubtless, the quiet frontier town will be swarming with visitors, and with such the use of their eyes will supersede topographical description. But *non contigit cuique adire Corinthum* — everybody will not go to Saarbrück, and a few lines about the localities will scarcely be greatly out of place. The railway line traversing Saarbrück, crossing the frontier beyond it at right angles, and stretching away to Forbach, and thence to Metz and the heart of France, emerges in a south-westerly direction, out of a range of wooded knolls that bound the Saarbrück plain on the north-east. These knolls, becoming quite a chain farther to the south, have as their backbone the Bavarian frontier, which runs almost parallel with the Saar Valley nearly as far as Saarguemines, about ten miles to the south-east of Saarbrück, at the point at which converge the Prussian, Bavarian, and French frontiers. In the centre of the valley into which the railway line runs down from these heights stands Saarbrück, a well-built, clean, and business-like town, penetrated by the river Saar, which is crossed by three bridges, of which one is the railway bridge. The portion of the town north of the Saar is called St. Johann, that to the south is Saarbrück proper.

Each of the bridges connecting these two had its thoroughfare, at the time of which I write, partially obstructed by casks filled with stones, while other casks stood in readiness to block the remainder of the passage. Traversing Saarbrück, the Forbach road encounters westward a very abrupt rise, up which it winds with twists and cuttings, and finally has a somewhat deep cutting through the crest and crown of the ridge. The ground on the face of this slope is very much broken, and, with the town and the bridge at its foot, is calculated materially to dismember an army that might be forced backward off the plateau of which it forms the margin towards Saarbrück. Emerging on this plateau, we find it falling with a very gradual slope down into a valley that lies parallel to the ridge, bounded on the further side, both to the right and left, by densely-wooded rising ground. From the centre of this valley there runs up at right angles another valley, in the throat of which, and directly opposite the centre of the ridge above Saarbrück, lies the French town of Forbach, at a distance of five miles. This valley is bounded on its left, as one looks from Saarbrück, by an abruptly-rising series of heights, crowned with a table-land. Those heights project boldly into the first-named valley, almost in the form of a natural bastion, gliding gradually away further on the left into the lower wooded slopes. These heights, with their bluff bastion-like termination, form

the famous "Spicheren-Berg." Across the débouchement of the transverse valley into the parallel valley runs the imaginary frontier line; traversing on one side the wooded rising grounds at Schönecken, on the other the Spicheren-Berg, crossing the railway, and going first north-west and then due west to the right, while on the left it trends away in a south-easterly direction till it strikes the Saar, which continues the boundary till the projecting frontier point near Saarguemines.

All along this imaginary line, the hostile piquets and videttes confronted each other. As one stood on the Forbach road, looking up the transverse valley toward Forbach, he saw below him a Prussian piquet of Uhlans and infantry, and on the little knolls in advance, the videttes circling singly, their lance-pennons fluttering in the wind. Several hundred yards further away, by the side of the Forbach road, was a big block-house, which served the French as a piquet-house. Outside this the Frenchmen were to be seen sitting or lounging about in considerable numbers. In their front was the chain of their videttes. All along the frontier line to the right and left of this point, there ran this arrangement of videttes and piquets. The French Chasseurs had a camp of about fifty tents some distance to the right of the Forbach road, and occupied the wood behind it, seemingly in some force. Towards Saarguemines, French and Prussian soldiers confronted each other in larger

bodies ; but in this important part of the frontier, where Prussia and Bavaria are, as it were, projected some distance into France, they kept at a rather more respectful distance from each other. In those pleasant early days, while as yet there were no graves on the Spicheren-Berg, and no shattered men lying in the Lazarettes, or littering the platform of the railway station in the blood-stained stretchers, the piquets and videttes formed quite the diversion of the Saarbrück people. After work was over, the labouring people used regularly to take a stroll up the heights, to watch the dropping fire, which was lazily maintained, fain to see a German marksman prove his skill by hitting a Frenchman. Both sides were very cautious, and few casualties took place. As yet the Saarbrück hospital contained but two wounded Germans, both linesmen of the Hohenzollern regiment. The French were reputed to be in force at Forbach, as many as 15,000 men. Saarbrück was, however, in no trepidation, and kept a good face up with its little garrison of one battalion of the 40th infantry (the Hohenzollern regiment) and the 7th (or Rhineland) Uhlan regiment. Now and then a German and a Frenchman appeared to lose their temper, and blazed away at each other as fast as they could load. As regards aim, there was nothing to boast of on either side.

A plucky little cavalry expedition, which had the crowning merit of being successful, occurred opportunely

enough to furnish the Saarbrückians with fresh gossip-matter, and the little garrison with encouragement. About the 20th July, a detachment of thirty Rhineland Uhlans left Saarbrück, under the command of Lieutenant von Voight, charged with the duty of destroying a viaduct on the railway line which connects Metz with Saarguemines, Bitche, Hagenau, and Strassburg. A single glance at the map will show the reader the great use of this line to the French. Branching off from the Forbach-Metz railway, near Cocheren, a little place a few miles inside the frontier, it skirts the frontier throughout its whole length, and admitted of the speedy transport of supports all along it. To interrupt the communication thus afforded, was manifestly of immense importance to the Germans, and the point selected was a viaduct of considerable height, a little on the Saarguemines side of Bitche. The little band proceeded first inland to Neunkirchen, where the services were enlisted of a body of miners from the ironworks and collieries there, men experienced in the conducting of blasting operations, and ready to face danger for the sake of Germany. Those were mounted on led horses, and the detachment proceeded to Zweibrucken, whence the frontier was reached at a point almost due south. It was found that the French were on the frontier line in considerable force, sufficient to frustrate efforts made to get at the bridge on two successive nights. To cut the line of outposts

would have been easy, but the aim was not to do so, but to blow up the viaduct, and to effect this it became obvious that a flank movement of rapidity would have to be executed. A few riding-lessons were given to the mining engineers, to enable them to sit the troop horses at a gallop; and then, on the night between the 24th and 25th, the frontier was crossed, without molestation, at a secluded point to the right of where the French were on the outlook. A gallop of about seven miles brought the party to the bridge. The engineers went to work at once, the Uhlans covering the working party on both sides. In a very short time the viaduct blew up with a grand explosion, and the French, then for the first time becoming aware of how they had been circumvented, hurried from the frontier inland to the spot. The Uhlans kept them at bay till the artificers had completed the work of destruction. A large quantity of material, both warlike and commercial, was destroyed, the engineers remounted, and the party galloped back, reaching German soil without a single casualty. The Uhlans met with an enthusiastic reception, when they rode back into Saarbrück after their little exploit.

As yet the evil days were not, and it was not easy to realise the wrath to come, as one sat by the table d'hôte, in the sunshiny Rheinischer Hof, clinking glasses with those right pleasant comrades, the officers of the Hohenzollern battalion. Over the good Rhine wine, the pro-

jected undertakings of the patrols were freely discussed, and there existed for a few of us a standing eligibility for the reception of stray French bullets, in return for the trifling inconvenience of getting up in the small hours, and accompanying the patrol of the morning. The narrative of one of those expeditions—it was made, if my notes are correct, on the 28th of July—will suffice as a sample. In the grey dawn, a small party of the 40th, consisting of twelve men and two under-officers, started from the barracks, to reconnoitre the frontier line; and this party I accompanied. It was about four in the morning that we reached the top of the rising ground outside Saarbrück, of which I have had occasion to speak so often. Everything seemed quiet in the valley below, and we went onward to the right front, in the direction of a little house that is very close to the frontier line. We found it unoccupied, save by an old woman, who dwelt in it contentedly while the bullets were hourly whistling over her roof. She told us with a yawn that all was quiet, and we went forward again, inclining to the right to gain the cover of the edge of a wood that occupies a rising ground, over the summit of which goes the frontier line. Skirting this wood for some distance, we had crossed the frontier, and were in French territory, still without seeing anything in the shape of French troops. Suddenly there came a piff-paff of smoke from behind a tree, a little way up the knoll, less

than one hundred yards to our right. There was but one shot, but the cover was so dense that, for all we could tell, the wood might be alive with Frenchmen ; so we discreetly slanted away to the left, crossing an interval of open ground near the railway line, and then striking into a wood which occupies an isolated knoll that rises out of the valley. The trees in this wood are much less close than in the other, and we thought that if any Frenchmen were in it, we could hardly fail to see them. The aim of the reconnoitring party was to get to its left edge, as far forward as possible, so as to be parallel with the French vidette, and to have the opportunity of investigating, at as short distance as possible, the dispositions of the French in the neighbourhood of their piquet-house on the Forbach road. We had got about half through the wood when we heard a wild screech directly in our rear, and between us and home. Turning round I saw about twenty red-breeched French soldiers dancing about excitedly, and alternating gesticulations with the discharge of their rifles. They were within a short eighty yards of us, and, if they could have shot straight, had as easy a mark as might be. They had to all appearance been lining the edge of the wood where it fronted Saarbrück, and we had unwittingly turned their flank. If they could only have kept down their excitement, and held their tongues, they might literally have stalked us from behind, for we had not the remotest

suspicion that there was anything in our rear, and the party was concentrating its attention on its front. The coolness of the under-officer who commanded the little party was inimitable. He was smoking his morning pipe, and never troubled to take it out of his mouth. He grunted an order or two, which brought us out of the wood on to the plain on its left, across which we struck steadily, slanting inward toward our outpost on the Forbach road. The Frenchmen continued to fire after us for some time, and managed to hit one of the men on his pouch. Had the shot taken effect, it would have penetrated the wrong way for honour, but the ball was a spent one. We ultimately got back to breakfast all right, the under-officer's pipe still in full blast.

On the same day, when the one o'clock *table d'hôte* was in progress, a report was brought in that the French were moving cannon over the brow of the Spicheren-Berg, on to a little table-land about half-way down the slope. Of this little plateau they were very fond, having continually their sharpshooters posted all round it. On the previous evening, a French general had reconnoitred from it the German slope of the valley, and, as reported by a countryman, had put a number of questions to the rustics, as to the position of Saarbrück, and the strength of the force occupying it. Immediately the drummers paraded the town, beating to arms. A company of the Hohenzollerns occupied each of the bridges, the cavalry

sent a detachment on to the height, while the rest remained standing to their horses in the Central Platz, and a third company of the Hohenzollerns marched up the hill, and took up a position of watchfulness just behind its crest. On the summit, besides the Uhlans, there was a considerable collection of civilians, eagerly watching the disposition of the cannon on the plateau. Crowds ever have a tendency to draw fire, so I gave this one a wide berth, and sat down some distance aside, on a spot whence a view of the whole front was commanded. There were six field-pieces in all, which seemed to be drawn by infantry men into position. What the object was did not seem very apparent. It might be, I thought, that under the diversion of a cannonade on the left, an attempt might be made to steal round on the right, and get into Saarbrück by a *coup de main*, or, again, to ascertain the range might have been all that was intended.

Presently there came a thunder plump, which sent the civilians crowding inside a little beer-house called "The Belle Vue," that stands on the brow of the hill, just off the road. Almost immediately I saw a puff of smoke come from the mouth of one of the cannon, and a shell struck on the road close by the beer-house, bursting as it fell. There was a stampede on the part of the civilians out of the beer-house, and they scuttled vigorously under cover over the hill. They were only just in time.

Indeed the house was by no means empty when another shell, ricocheting off the road, struck its front, went through the wall as if it had been paper, and burst inside, blowing out the windows and part of the roof. Another followed, also striking the front, but it did not burst. Three more shots were fired, one of which wrecked an outhouse behind the beer-house, and then the French gave over firing, and withdrew their cannon from the plateau backwards out of sight. When the artillery had been withdrawn I entered the beer-house, which already had been re-occupied by its inhabitants. The women-folk stood weeping and bewailing the mischief. A more complete wreck, indeed, I never saw. Two rooms had been blown into one, the bar knocked into little pieces, the table, at which I had drunk a glass of seltzer-water a couple of hours before, split up into tinder, and a great gap torn in the floor, exposing the cellarage, where there had evidently been a smash royal among the bottles. The French practice was by no means bad. Three shots out of six struck the house. It was shut up, and there was no more cool seltzer-water after a hot walk on the hill.

The incident of the afternoon stimulated the videttes with unwonted alertness, and they blazed away at each other till it was nearly quite dark. One of the last shots fired killed an Uhlan who was making the patrol. The poor fellow was hit full on the forehead, and must have

died instantaneously. I was on the height when the infantry men carried in the corpse on a stretcher improvised of their guns. The drops of blood pit-patted on the road as they carried him past me, his cloak thrown over his limbs. But his face was bare, and I knew the man at once. I had given him a cigar in the afternoon as I met him on the Forbach road going out on vidette. Quite a lad he was, with the down hardly grown on his cheek, and likely enough a mother might have been thinking of him to-night, little knowing that he was lying stark and cold, waiting for a grave.

In the sunshiny bloodless days of the end of July, spy-hunting was another great diversion to idle men. Not that the German patrols thought or looked upon it by any means in the light of an amusement; on the contrary, they regarded it as a very serious and responsible occupation indeed, and, not having as yet got the gauge of the French *fainéance* in this important department of military operations, gave open ear to all the stories about suspicious persons having been seen which were retailed to them by wiseacres. On the forenoon of the 30th of July I witnessed with great amusement one of these expeditions. To a sergeant in command of a detachment came a young civilian in a light coat, who had seen a person, looking very like a Frenchman, prowling about away to the right of the German advanced centre. Sergeant, on receiving the informa-

tion, solemnly draws his sword, and then betakes himself to consideration. Having finished his cogitation, he takes his pipe out of his mouth and orders out a party of four Fusiliers. The squad start at a brisk walk, headed by the sergeant, who brings his sword down to the "right engage" as he proceeds. Getting excited, he begins to run, and his men run after him. The civilian in the white coat accompanies the sergeant. An eminence is reached commanding rather an extensive view. Nobody is to be seen. Sergeant turns on to civilian resentfully, reproaches him for being the communicant of a canard, sheathes his sword, re-lights his pipe, and commences a return with his party at his heels. The civilian, whose *amour propre* is wounded, suddenly detects a crouching individual in the foreground, and there is triumph in the tone in which he calls the sergeant back. Sergeant wheels about, pouches his pipe, draws his sword, and then looks in the direction indicated. Having marked his prey, he with his party starts off at top speed down the hill, and captures the crouching individual, who finds himself between a file of men, with the sergeant's sword in the immediate foreground, before he can collect his senses. When he has accomplished this, crouching individual explains with some indignation—its vent impeded by the necessity for keeping his pipe alight—that he has been specially commissioned by the German Commandant to watch the

French, and, if possible, to get among them. The sergeant, in fact, has apprehended his own spy. Sergeant seems inclined to look foolish, and of course gets angry at the civilian again. Civilian, however, is prepared to vindicate himself. He has seen another "suspicious" close to the edge of the wood to the left, and the sergeant, mitigating his choler, makes off for this supposed spy No. 2. I should have mentioned that a little procession of loafers has from the first dogged the heels of the party, and that suggestions are freely tendered by everybody at once, including the small boys. When spy No. 2 is reached he is found to be a sheepish-looking rustic in a ragged blue blouse, who is sitting on the dyke-side with a female, presumably his sweetheart. The account he gives of himself is not considered satisfactory—indeed he can give no coherent account at all, the proximity of the sergeant's sword having apparently addled him. Accordingly he is made a prisoner in due form. The Fusiliers fix their sword-bayonets and take position on either side of him. The sergeant, with his sword still at the "right engage," marches bravely in the van; the civilian looks as if he had saved the Fatherland; the small boys whisperingly compare notes as to the personal appearance of the "spy," who they seem to consider deserves to be shot on the spot. And so the procession takes its way to the Commandant's quarters, where it probably turns out that the "spy" is no spy at

all, but a bumpkin German to the soles of his huge brogues.

Sunday, the 31st of July, was a day of fast, humiliation, and prayer for the success of the German arms, appointed by an edict of King Wilhelm. It was kept devoutly. Men in Saarbrück went to church this day who had not darkened the church door for years. The garrison, as well as a great proportion of the townsfolk, attended the great church in the central Platz, whither I also turned in with the rest. The piled arms, with the bayonets fixed, that flanked the principal entrance, spoke of war time. The Covenanters worshipped their God with their weapons in hand—

"The lyart veteran leaning on his spear."

The German soldiers left their arms outside the church, but ready to be grasped and used at a moment's notice. The preliminary music was emblematic. It began with a low wail of pain and sorrow. The nation confessed its many sins, and bemoaned its unworthiness of the favour of God. Then broke out sharp and shrill the urgent call to arms. Then followed a bicker and clash as of two mighty hosts joining the battle one with the other. After the loud din of the fray there pealed forth the joyous notes of triumph—victory had been won, and the appropriate finale was the ever-noble *Te Deum*. Then arose the preacher, an old man with a worn ascetic face, snow-white hair, eyes that sparkled like live coals

under excitement, and a voice that pealed like a trumpet to the uttermost corner of the great church, and thrilled the auditor with its indescribable vibration. His discourse was the music done into words. After telling the people in sternly plain language that they were wicked enough to have forfeited the Divine favour, he implored them to merit it by humiliation, repentance, and faith. Then, raising his voice, he spoke of the goodness of Germany's cause,—how that she courted not war, but for her honour's sake accepted it when forced upon her. The colour came into the withered cheek, and the right arm swayed above the head as if it grasped a sword, as the old man fervently enjoined the duty of patriotism and invoked the blessing of Heaven on the arms of Germany. The most casual observer could notice the thrilling effect on the audience. It would scarcely have been surprising had a cheer broken out from the people who hung on the preacher's words.

Not a dozen miles from this Saarbrück church a very different scene was meanwhile being enacted. A detachment of forty infantry men, part of the garrison of Saarlouis, was patrolling the frontier between Geisweiler and Ludweiler, when, about half-past eleven in the forenoon, they came suddenly on a body of French, consisting of three companies of infantry. These were invaders, for the soil was German; and, notwithstanding the discrepancy of numbers, the children of the Fatherland

steadily advanced to the encounter. The hostile bodies were already exchanging shots when a squadron of French Chasseurs suddenly dashed into the arena, and, with loud cheers, charged over the broken ground towards the Germans. These waited till the horsemen, disorganised by the nature of the ground, had come within point-blank range, and then gave fire in a volley. French saddles were emptied, and the Chasseurs whirled hurriedly away to the left. The Germans, encouraged by this triumph, pressed forward to meet the French infantry. Several volleys were exchanged, the Germans still pushing on, till at length the Frenchmen withdrew in a rout, throwing off their knapsacks as they ran to lighten their flight. On the field lay dead eight French soldiers and one officer. The Germans sustained inconsiderable damage. Two were severely wounded and several slightly.

The ex-Emperor Napoleon has placed upon record his piteous testimony to the skill with which the German Commander-in-Chief masked his dispositions till the hour came for the veil to be drawn aside with a result so disastrous for the French arms. If there was bewilderment and ignorance on the French side of the frontier, there was scarcely less puzzlement for those who were on the German side of the hedge. The secret was so well kept that not a glimmer of it had dawned on Saarbrück on the last day of July. When the war was declared the

garrison of Saarbrück consisted of a battalion of infantry and a regiment of Uhlans. A fortnight had passed, and the reinforcements might have been reckoned by the half-dozen. It was known that Frossard, with a whole army corps, was looking across at Saarbrück over the ridges of the Spicheren, and nobody had the means of knowing what everybody knows now, the reason, so discreditable to French organization, which prevented him from blowing out of his path the sparse picquets and patrols, and invading the territory which had its frontier only nominally guarded. Men asked each other if it were possible that the Frenchmen did not know the weakness of the land. The infantrymen and the Uhlans were manipulated dexterously and assiduously to make it seem that a battalion was a brigade, and a few hundred horsemen a powerful cavalry force; yet it was felt universally that the place was held only by dint of sheer impudence—for there were no supports of importance as yet nigh at hand—and that the bubble must burst summarily if Frossart should fling aside his unaccountable inactivity. With long faces and boding hearts the townspeople, striving still to wear an aspect of confidence, muttered amongst themselves, "How long, how long?" Students of military topography, men who read Lavallée and pored over their maps, failed not to arrive at the conviction that somewhere between the Moselle and the Vosges lay an eligible tract for an invasion of

France. The French frontier here, as it stood before the recent annexations, was unnatural in a physical sense; and therefore it was weak. The prominent natural features—the rivers and hills—ran transversely to the boundary line, and the valleys accordingly afforded so many natural roads whereby the country might be penetrated. Were the hills which separate these straths rough and prominent, the difficulty of penetration would have been greatly increased from the danger that presented to an invading army of being taken in flank; but hardly anywhere is such their characteristic, and the low hills and insignificant heights may be swept by an army advancing up one of the shallow valleys. This configuration, in combination with the artificial frontier line, leaving, as it were, so many open portals inviting to the entrance of France, Vauban, the great French engineer, had devoted his energies to the erection of artificial guardians over the frontier naturally so open. On the Moselle he fortified Metz and Thionville. The Vosges bulwark is strengthened by Bitche and Phalsburg; but there lies a wide plain between the Vosges and the Moselle, with nothing in the shape of natural or artificial defence. Vauban had fortified Saarlouis, but in 1815 the Allies deprived the French of Saarlouis, which was now in the possession of a German garrison, and instead of being a protection to the French frontier was a thorn in its side. The result seemed to be that a German army could

advance, plunge into France, elude Metz by way of Nancy, and reach the basin of the Marne without encountering any other obstacle than Toul. Once in the Marne basin, the road to Paris was open.

But there were no signs of a German army on the frontier, and every day, it was argued, must be adding to the strength of the French army now standing stockade-wise across the track. But surely the province of a defensive stockade was one hardly in accordance with the precedents or idiosyncrasies of the armies of France. Why the men in red breeches lay so long basking in the sun on the slopes of Spicheren we could not comprehend, but the day must surely be near now, we said one unto the other, when they would gird up their loins and roll their columns on over the Exercise Platz and across the Saar into the Köllerthaler Wald or the Pfalz. And in their path stood but an open town, a couple of bridges half barricaded with barrels, a battalion of infantry, and a regiment of Uhlans.

The 1st of August, while the French were yet supine, brought to Saarbrück what all hoped was the earnest of a host, not alone of resistance, but invasion. On the afternoon of that day the third battalion of the 40th, two companies of its first battalion, and two batteries of artillery, reached the vicinity and made their bivouac on a flat upland in front of a wood. They had left Trèves a fortnight before, and marched down by what seemed

strangely easy stages. As soon as the news of their arrival reached Saarbrück, I went out to the encampment with some friends, carrying boxes of cigars, which form an excellent introduction to German troops everywhere. The first bivouac we saw, it naturally interested us greatly, and the reader may care to read of it as a type of the system. It was a very pretty sight. On the left were the artillery, the guns regularly parked, with the ammunition-waggons in their rear, and in front of each line so formed the picquet ropes, with the horses fastened to them, and the harness deposited on the ground behind them. The forge was alight, and the farriers busy shoeing horses, while the armourer had also his fire alight, and was tinkering some small arms. Further on the right was the battalion of infantry, or rather the two half-battalions, each of two companies. The Germans always bisect their battalions in this way, both in camp and in action—a little interval constituted the separation. In the fore-front lay or sat the officers, enjoying their Rhine wine. In their rear, in the centre, was the battalion colour in its cover, and stuck deep in the ground, with the drum-major's halberd alongside of it, and the drums and instruments of the band lying all around it. Then came a straight row of knapsacks, each surrounded by the rolled great-coat, just as the front rank had deposited them. About ten paces to the rear was another similar row, and in the interval stood the stacks of piled

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needle-guns. This formation existed mathematically right away to the rear. The men were dispersed in various directions, but none strayed to a great distance, the limit being marked by a cordon of sentries. There was a crowd round a beer cart, another round a wine cart. There was soon a crowd round us as we produced the cigars we carried. On a knoll sat a band of singers chanting a song of Fatherland. A squad, whose bivouac lay in an orchard, engaged themselves in shaking the trees and eating the fruit as it fell. Others, again, amused themselves by gymnastic exercises, running races, or jumping against each other. Evidently they were as fresh as if they had not marched a mile; yet they had been on the road fourteen days, and had never had their clothes off, lying in the bivouac night after night. In the rear, close to the wood, the pioneers had dug trenches and gathered wood. The fires were alight, and slung on poles extending from bank to bank were the simmering camp-kettles, evolving a very savoury odour. What were their contents was not difficult to guess. In the ditch by the woodside lay some yet warm bullock hides. The animals had been slaughtered, cut up, and the pieces were in the pot, all within a couple of hours of the halt. Meanwhile, the men stayed the edge of their appetite with the black bread and the beer, of which latter there was a plentiful supply. The dusk gradually began to gather. The

kettles were taken off the fires, and their contents distributed. The men ate and were filled, and then gathered round the fires to sing and to gossip. The good people of Saarbrück had come up among their countrymen in some numbers, and great was the fraternisation. In the foreground, by little camp-tables, which had sprung up as if by magic, the officers sat clinking their glasses of Rhine-wine and smoking placidly, as they listened to the band which played for half an hour before the watch-setting at nine o'clock. Then the "lie down" sounded, and the men, unrolling their cloaks, gave themselves a shake, put their heads upon their knapsacks, and in less than a quarter of an hour there arose a sound of conscientious snoring, to which a marsh full of frogs was not fit to hold a candle. The officers sat later by lantern light; but they, too, one by one quitted the social circle, and stretched themselves on their cloaks on the ground. By-and-by there were left, tarrying over the wine cup, only a burly senior captain, the jovial adjutant, and a silent lieutenant, the last of whom I had at intervals suspected of being asleep, but who always livened up to fill his glass as the bottle passed him. Then they, too, "turned in," if the phrase is allowable, when everything was outside, and, excepting the chain of sentries and the quarter guard, the whole camp was wrapped in the deepest slumber.

At three punctually the bugler of the night sounded

the reveille, and the camp awoke and rubbed its eyes, with many yawns. Cloaks were rolled, and the fragrance of the morning pipe scented the cool clear air. The cooks stirred the unextinguished embers of the fires and piled on the billets. The camp-kettles were again strung on the cross-poles, this time filled with coffee, and in about three-quarters of an hour from the reveille some 1,500 men were masticating the black bread and drinking the black, milkless coffee out of their mess-tins. Then the band played again, and the men got under arms and answered to the roll-call. This done they were ready for the road, the hour being half-past four A.M. Had there been a march they would have journeyed till about eight or nine, taken a rest during the heat of the day, and probably have done a few miles more in the cool of the evening. But no marching was in orders for the day, and so the arms were piled again, and the men were free to do as they liked, always keeping within the limits indicated by the sentries. Many went to sleep again, others betook themselves to tailoring jobs with as much aptitude as if they were genuine sons of the goose, and occasionally with a little disregard to the critical niceties of decorum in the way of costume. Others did nothing but smoke in all the luxurious *dolce far niente* of perfect idleness. Ten minutes would have sufficed to see the camp struck and the troops on their march. It was impossible to conceive men in better

heart; officers and men alike self-reliant, buoyant, and ready for anything, in the fullest conviction that they could not be beaten.

This Trèves contingent brought in three spies—rather a curious assortment. One was a French officer; the other a clergyman, or at all events a person who wore the dress of one; the third, outwardly and visibly, was a woman. For a couple of days she had dogged the Hohenzollerns, who, with all chivalry, had refrained from prying very closely into her business; but one morning a sergeant, of a matter-of-fact turn of mind, interviewed the lady, and the result was the discovery—I fear I perpetrate a bull—that she was a man. The make-up was of a character to do some credit to the sergeant's power of observation.

CHAPTER II.

SAARBRÜCK AND SPICHEREN.

On the morning of the 2nd of August, when the Hohenzollerns were lounging in their sunshiny bivouac, the French Emperor, with his boy, was travelling by train from Metz to Forbach. The German videttes down in the valley heard the gusts of cheering with which Frossard's soldiers welcomed the Head of the State and his heir. Ignorant of the cause, some put the cheering down as a response to the announcement of a French success somewhere; others ascribed it to an extra issue of beer. How could the honest Uhlans discern that the father had come to the frontier to make a military promenade to tickle wherewithal the Parisians, and that "Lulu," as they irreverently called the heir to the imperial diadem, was with his father that he might obtain his baptism of fire?

The night had passed in extreme quiet all along the frontier, and in the morning it seemed as if the 2nd was to be as monotonous as had been the 1st. General von Klepsal and another brigadier went on reconnoitring

expeditions, and came back again to a placid breakfast. A couple of guns with their detachments, part of the batteries that had arrived the previous night, went up the Saar to St. Arnual, and finding nothing threatening there, the officer brought them back. Two more, on their return, went out in the same direction, their functions appearing purely those of patrol. Two guns were leisurely got up on the height above the town at the Bellevue, and there remained. The soldiers in the barrack-yards, and in the several posts around the environs of the town, slept and smoked and gossiped, their arms stacked as usual; the officers sat under the trees drinking their Rhine wine, and the whole place seemed oppressed by the drowsy effect of a fervently hot day.

A little after ten, having crossed over the Saarbrück valley from the night's bivouac, I leisurely climbed the slope of the Bellevue height. There was no bustle on the road, and I saw nothing out of the common on our side as I reached the Exercise Platz at the top. But across the valley on the French side there was a sight to see. I use the terms "right" and "left" with reference to my position, looking across at the French, whether in speaking of their attack or of the German defence. On the left, then, of the bastion-like plateau, already mentioned more than once, there runs tortuously a fine road leading up out of the valley intervening

between the German and the French frontier positions. It conducts over the brow of the hill, skirting the right of a wood, and behind this wood and hill it had long been known that the French were located in force. Near the top this road throws out two branch roads, which both also lead down into the valley. One is a rough country road that skirts the right edge of the plateau; the other is a mere green track, of, however, some breadth, which crests the plateau, and tumbles off its edge down the abrupt poplar-clad slope that parts the upland from the valley.

Down all these three roads were streaming dense and glittering currents of French troops; the stream on the great road flowing swiftest and farthest. The sun struck on the bright bayonets, and threw out from the grey and green background the scarlet-legged infantrymen. Those came on in the true careless irregular French style, about six abreast, with hardly a pretence at formation, but with a speed that was remarkable. The moment that the head of the column touched the valley it broke like spray. As file after file reached a certain point it became dissipated; the men composing it extended at a run farther and farther, till by the time that the heads of all three columns were in the valley, an unbroken line of skirmishers was drawn several hundred yards to the front. Then began the steady deployment of company after company,

battalion after battalion; and almost before one had realised the position, a long dense line had been ruled along the bottom of the valley behind the fainter line of the skirmishers. Squadrons of cavalry streamed down, and, forming line at a gallop, rapidly overtook the infantry. Passing through the intervals, they re-formed and pushed on to occupy and cover the flanks of the advance.

While this was going on in the valley the stream from behind the wood and the hill seemed to flow from a source that never would run dry. It was hardly a gap that was caused in it by the two batteries of field artillery that came down and wheeled off the road on to the verge of the plateau, the gunners unlimbering and standing ready by the venomous pieces that looked across at us with their wicked black mouths. Higher up on the crest there was visible another field battery, apparently of larger guns. In all, before I had to quit the heights, I am satisfied that from 6,000 to 7,000 French troops were in sight. The peculiarity of the movements I have just described was their perfect quietness and uninterruption. The French tirailleurs were already breasting the slope that led up to the positions held by the Germans; their main advance was more than half across the valley, and yet not a Chassepot gave tongue. The range must have been within 300 yards, and still the Frenchmen pressed on with lissom

agility, but without a single shot. On the German side there existed as profound quietness; either side seemed reluctant to begin the ball.

The German position demands a short explanation to aid in the comprehension of what took place. The height known indifferently as the Bellevue Height and the Exercise Platz is a natural rampart thrown up between Saarbrück and the frontier. It is depressed a little to the left of its centre, and the southern eminence is in its turn slightly cleft, the *coll* to the right being surmounted by a pleasure-garden and serrated with terraces. The lumpy hill on the left slopes more gently on the French side than on the German, and extends eastward so as to form a cover to the village of St. Arnual, lying about three miles nearer Saarguemines than Saarbrück. This height, or rather these series of heights, present tempting opportunities for taking up a strong defensive position. But they have two fatal defects. The frontier valley circumvents them both to the right near Schönecken and to the left a little beyond St. Arnual. Thus from either hand the heights may be turned, the valley of the Saar penetrated, and Saarbrück taken. Of this formation the French were evidently aware. They presently began to echelon their advance, and to bring up their left shoulders as if they meant sweeping round the height to the left, and pouring into the Saar valley *viâ* St. Arnual. And it seemed as if the

German disposition had anticipated this intention. The German force was indeed so weak that it was hopeless to attempt keeping the whole line; and, so far as it had been made available at all, the concentrations tended towards the defence of the St. Arnual gap. On the heights, then, when and for some time after the French made their appearance in the valley, there was hardly anything but the ordinary outposts and supporting detachments. I question, indeed, if there came any reinforcements at all on to the berg. What force there was extended itself in a thin line along the crest, taking advantage of a scooped-out road that traversed that direction. It was policy on its part to delay firing as long as possible, since the paucity of its fire would betray its weakness. And it was evident that the French did not half like the berg, with what secrets there might be concealed behind it, but inclined rather to the St. Arnual direction, although cautious not to offer their flank towards the berg.

But the long silence of the Germans appeared to give rise to the impression on the part of the French that after all there could be nothing formidable in that position, since opportunities so tempting were not taken advantage of. So with one impulse the French echelons brought forward their right shoulders, re-formed a continuous line, and confronted now the swell of the height directly in front of Saarbrück. Their tirailleurs opened a spattering fire,

and then the Germans replied. This was the moment of the bursting of our little Saarbrück bubble. The French opened fire all along their line, sweeping the height with a storm of Chassepot bullets. Their artillery took up the sombre music from the plateau over against the valley, and the height was at once untenable. I was behind a tree in front of the Exercise Platz when it began. What of German defence there was lay entirely to the left of me, and there was nothing between the Frenchmen and the trees but a Uhlan's horse careering wildly, riderless. This isolation might have been of service as not calculated to draw the French fire, had the gentlemen who plied that fire only been aware of it; but to make sure they blazed away at the height all along its length. Bullets had struck the tree behind which I stood, and a shell had ploughed a spiteful furrow athwart the Exercise Platz in my rear. Evacuation seemed eminently advisable, and so I started at a run and got into the dip of the road without any casualty. The fusiliers were making a short rally on the bank above it, and the ping of the bullets flew over the road high above my head. As I stopped to take breath, a fusilier on the edge of the bank was shot through the back and came crashing down the shrubs on to the road at my feet. His back was broken, I think; anyhow, he could not move the upper part of his body, but he took a grateful pull at the flask which I held to his lips. As I passed downward towards the

town I found the Uhlans drawn up in the shelter formed by the bend of the road as it winds up to the Bellevue. The whizz of the bullets coming over the bank above them, and the sight of the beaten-back fusiliers, convinced them of the inadvisability of proceeding further. They went about and retreated through Saarbrück, over the bridge through the suburb of St. Johann, and having passed the railway station took post on a road leading into the interior. Just as I turned the corner which brought me in sight of the Uhlans a shell burst in the centre of a knot of fusiliers who were hurrying down the road. Had the party been in the shell itself, it could not have been more effectually shattered. A sergeant and five men were struck down by this one shell—how many of these were killed I did not stop to look.

By this time the French had crowned the heights all along, and were driving the German fusiliers down the inner slope towards us; and they had been very quick with their artillery. Already they had got one battery on to the *coll* at the pleasure-garden, and another showed its teeth through the trees of the Exercise Platz. One could see the quick flashes in rapid succession. All Saarbrück and St. Johann were of course fully commanded. The town was naturally in a state of intense excitement, but the people in the houses lining the street that leads to the height stuck to their homes like rabbits to their burrows, even when the shells were crashing into

the houses and sweeping down the thoroughfare. There was partial safety in the cross streets, where they were lined with houses on both sides, although occasionally a shell would play old gooseberry among the tiles, and make one think of Fleet Street chimney-pots in a gale of wind. But there was a space on the road to the railway station, whither I was walking, where there were no houses, and this had to be traversed before the road, turning with a sweep towards the railway station, could be reached. The townspeople were banked in masses at either verge of this *via dolorosa*, and now and then a small boy ran the gauntlet. A burgher tried it, and got a chassepot bullet through the fleshiest part of a very goodly corporation.

My companion and myself got through in safety, and then were in a kind of triangle, off which goes the road to the station on a little rising ground, another road parallel to the frontier, and yet another across the bridge. The base of this triangle is formed by the Hotel Hagen, in which we sought refuge on finding that the railway station had been selected as the spot where the Germans were to make a final stand with the artillery which they had brought up from the bivouac. In the lee of this Hotel Hagen were collected several detachments of infantry. Others held the bridge over the Saar, that is to say, they occupied the houses commanding it. A bee-line, drawn from the cannon on the Exercise Platz to the cannon on

the esplanade in front of the railway station would pass over the Hotel Hagen, and also over the bridge. The French were shelling the houses on the bridge; they were shelling the troops in the triangle in front of the hotel; they were replying with shells to the German shells from the railway station. Thus the Hotel Hagen was rather warm quarters. There was this additional complication,—that exit in any direction whatever seemed to involve more risk than staying still; so we stayed still, my companion and I. We found three or four more Englishmen there, some ladies, and a heterogeneous collection of *Zimmermädchen* and *Stallknechts*. The landlord of the Hagen was the coolest customer I have ever met. His house was being knocked about his ears, glass and crockery smashing in all directions. This exemplary Boniface asked me coolly, under these circumstances, for four groschen, the price of a bottle of seltzer-water that I had forgotten to pay for the night before. He gave me change for a thaler with the profoundest phlegm, and then grumbled that his *table d'hôte* had been bedevilled for the day. Bedevilled it certainly was,—at least that was the fate of the dinner. A shell had burst right in the big square stove on which is done all the cooking of a German hotel. Potatoes bespattered the roof, and gravy flowed on the floor. Some of the pans yet simmered on fragments left of the stove; others were made pancakes of against the walls. The landlady

and her maidens went off into hysterics, and we had to carry them into the cellar under the back yard, a shell bursting in that enclosure as we carried them down. The staircase leading to the first floor was shattered, and communication cut off. The fronts of the houses on the opposite side of the triangle were riddled, as indeed was the Hotel Hagen. We here heard for the first time the mitrailleuses at work. They plied from the Exercise Platz down on the bridge, and the bullets spattered very closely together along the narrow track. The report was very curious and distinctive. It sounded more like the tearing sound of one of those diabolical contrivances which silly people were wont to use at Greenwich Fair, and which gave one a lively sensation of his coat being torn down the back. Any one who is too young to remember this pleasing noise may form some conception of the report of the mitrailleuse by listening to a police-rattle. It is unquestionable that the mitrailleuse fire swept the bridge thoroughly; nothing could live where its hail fell. Then the smoke began to rise where the shells had set fire to the wood-work. A building in front, one on the flank, and another in the rear of us, were all blazing. The troops under our lee scuttled off under the shelter of a wall to the railway station, and so out into the open country beyond, several of them falling in the movement. Others took their places, coming in from St. Arnual, and later those evacuating the town

and falling back from the bridges; and they, too, took the same course, and also suffered more or less. All the while the German artillery from the station were firing directly over our heads, replying to the French fire on the heights, while the French continued to pour shells back in return.

Then the cry arose that the French had descended the slope and were actually in Saarbrück. This was confirmed from the fact that the German guns ceased firing, and it seemed that they were drawing off. Clearly we were left behind. We were, it is true, in the rear of the force to which we were attached; a safe position—but only in an advance. It appeared certain that all St. Johann, including the railway station, would be in the hands of the French in an hour or two. Four Englishmen in the Hotel Hagen, acting under the advice of a German correspondent of remarkable equanimity, concluded to wait the course of events, in the hope that if St. Johann were taken by the French to-day, it would be retaken by the Prussians to-morrow. The certainty of this was not quite apparent, and I thought it my duty, looking to the enjoyment of postal facilities, therefore, to get out of the place with all convenient speed. We left the Englishmen playing whist in the breakfast-room, and we—that is, an Austrian friend and myself—quitted the rickety shelter of the hotel, and made a run direct for the sheds near the railway station. To do this we had

to cross the line of fire, and that, too, where the shells were bursting thickest. There was no help for it, for there was no other road. We ran—I own it. I think I ran faster than ever I did in my life. My friend was hit on the calf of the leg by a stone thrown up by a bursting shell, but not lamed; I was not touched. Once at the sheds, we were safe. Traversing a deep rocky cutting, across which the shells still flew, we emerged into the back country, and followed first the railway and then the high road to a village named Duttweiler, about five English miles behind Saarbrück. On our way we saw numerous straggling soldiers, who did not know what had happened to their regiment. They were all making for the rear. We also passed a squadron of Uhlans drawn up on the road, and commanded by a reserve officer, who gave me his card, from which I learned that he was a Heidelberg professor. After our arrival at Duttweiler most of the Uhlans and a large proportion of the infantry passed through the village on their way to the rear. They reported that Lebach was the rendezvous, a place some fifteen English miles back from Saarbrück in the Trèves direction. Small detachments had been left to watch the French and keep up the communications. The French foreposts had occupied Saarbrück and held the bridges, but no force had crossed into St. Johann.

It has been the fashion on all sides to make very merry over this "military promenade" of the 2nd

August. No doubt, in the light shed upon the affair by our after-knowledge, we are entitled to set it down as something between a spectacle and a farce. But, at the time, nobody had either daring or data for suspecting that France had neither armies nor generals; and, given belongings that one is entitled to assume when a reputedly sane nation deliberately declares war, this affair of Saarbrück was undoubtedly the winning of the first trick of the game. German strategists have, naturally enough, made their own uses of a fiasco which was solely due to French unpreparedness and irresolution. It has been the fashion to argue that Saarbrück was designedly left as it was, to delude the French leaders into a belief of German unpreparedness, and to induce them to concentrate their forces, with the design of incursion, at an obviously weak point, upon what seemed an eligible track into the heart of Prussia; while in reality, had they obeyed the lure, and ventured inland from Saarbrück, they would have found the road barred, and the forests swarming with legions in spiked helmets. But this *ex post facto* special pleading would have been swept to the winds, if the French army had been but reasonably fit, and its commanders reasonably competent and enterprising. The fact is, that neither on the 2nd of August, nor for several days after, were the Germans ready to defend their frontier, much less to invade France, had they been attacked or resisted in the manner

the precedents of France gave one the title to count on. Saarbrück was held for days "on the bounce," with a sublime audacity that could only have succeeded so long, first, because the French were not ready for offensive action, and, secondly, because their means of obtaining information were so contemptible that they did not earlier come at the knowledge of the weakness of the force opposed to them. No doubt the German commanders had means whereby they ascertained the existence of both of these conditions, and possibly presumed on this knowledge to make their concentrations more leisurely and confidently than they would otherwise have done; but that a grave risk was actually encountered was obvious to any one on the spot. It has been stated that the woods in the rear of Saarbrück swarmed with troops, which could have successfully met an attempt of the French to penetrate further into the interior. The truth is that on the night of the action there was no force nearer Saarbrück than Neunkirchen, save scattered detachments of the infantry and cavalry which had evacuated Saarbrück, and a couple of squadrons of cuirassiers holding the roads as éclaireurs. Supports did exist further in the rear, but scattered abroad over the face of the country, as they pursued different lines of march, with Saarbrück as the point of convergence. Had a French army of invasion pushed on through Saarbrück on the 2nd, and marched rapidly into the interior, it

would not have been possible to concentrate those scattered regiments at any given point across the hostile line of march; and my firm conviction is that a Napoleon would have seen the Rhine without having had to fight a pitched battle.

It is needless to multiply evidence that it was not for strategical purposes that the Germans permitted this occupation of Saarbrück, the barrenness of which must surely have surprised themselves. There was not an officer within ten miles of Saarbrück who, for at least two days after the affair, did not expect to hear from hour to hour that the heads of the French columns were showing on the roads leading into the interior. Inside that radius, during those two days, hardly a reinforcement was pushed forward, simply because reinforcements were not as yet available. On the 3rd, a working party of engineers cut the railway below Duttweiler, that the enemy, in his expected advance, might not be able to avail himself of the iron road. Strange strategy, truly, to allow, if it could be prevented, the shelling of a German town, to expose a couple of battalions to the onslaught of a *corps d'armée* as the gallant fellows, construing their orders to "retire fighting" after their own hot and angry fashion, contested with reckless fury every inch of the ground! Strange strategy, truly, to involve that town in the all but certainty of a second shelling before it could be retaken, and of set purpose to let the enemy

get foothold on a position of such dominance as the Bellevue height, commanding all the area that must be traversed by a force aiming at its recapture! No, the French had a chance, and a great chance, on this 2nd of August; and that they did not take advantage of it is not to be ascribed to any acts of their adversaries, but to their own inconceivable unreadiness, and to the imbecile inaction of their leaders, assignable to ignorance, treachery, divided councils, an organisation that was chaos, and an Intendance that was rotten to its remotest ramification.

Criticism of the actual defence made would be absurd. The men fought with desperate valour, and were as cool under fire as if they had been at their dinner. One company of the Hohenzollerns bore the full fire of two French regiments for twenty minutes, and then only retired on receiving an order to do so. They were severely cut up, as a matter of course. Their captain was killed and a lieutenant wounded. It is hardly to the discredit of the little force that they allowed themselves to be surprised, as they unquestionably were. There were hardly men enough for sentries all along the line, to say nothing of actual defence. A field telegraph wire along the height from Ottenhausen to St. Arnual, and extending down into the town and the railway station, would have been an important aid.

Consequent upon the German evacuation of Saarbrück,

Duttweiler became a curious menagerie. The Hôtel Till, the only hostelrie in the little place, is a curious, rambling erection, rather unpromising looked at from the street, but improving on more intimate acquaintance, and of the most indiarubber-like capacity. There is wing after wing of bedrooms, great bare rooms with benches, tables, and old pictures, devoted to what use it is impossible to guess, long cavernous passages, and a staircase you might drive a coach and six up and down. How a place of the size comes to be located in such a village I cannot tell, but it was found a very ark of refuge for the foreign waifs and strays that had been driven out of Saarbrück. My friend and myself were the first arrivals. Then came a professor in a German university, an Englishman, whom I had last seen coolly sauntering through the fire in rear of a company of German infantry, and who, when he had tired of this amusement, had struck out for himself in search of a bed, and instinctively made tracks hither. He was followed by a waggon containing a miscellaneous load. It contained the four Englishmen whom we had left over their game of whist, a German correspondent, and two ladies, one of whom had been a Sister of Mercy in the campaign of 1866, and the other had come to Saarbrück from Bohemia, on purpose to be married to a Prussian feldwebel. He was on active duty, but a special dispensation had been obtained, and the fräulein was to have been wedded on the Tuesday

forenoon. The ceremony was to have taken place in the Hôtel Hagen, but the French shells postponed its performance. The officer went one way with his regiment, the lady came the other to be out of reach of the French. They were hardly seated when there came in an officer of the American army, who had seen the fun out and had then strolled out here. Presently arrived a couple of British officers in mufti, an English student from Bonn, an undergraduate of Oxford who had broken off a reading tour to come and see a bit of fighting, and a real live swell, with a fearful and wonderful coat, adorned with a girdle and several dozen pockets, with an eye-glass and long whiskers, a dog that seemed dearer to him than life, and a drawl that had not been perceptibly quickened by the French cannon. He—aw—had been going eastward somewhere to—aw—Constantinople or St. Petersburg, or—aw—somewhere, when he heard of something likely to be stirring at Saarbrück—and had come down to view its aspect through his eye-glass. The big hotel swallowed us all up somehow, and we assimilated into quite a happy family, feeding together, and looked upon with eyes of good-humoured wonderment by the honest villagers of Duttweiler.

With the only information at our command, to the effect that Lebach—far in the rear—was head-quarters for an army of advance as well as the little army of

retreat, the position in Duttweiler seemed as good as any, and we accordingly did not quit it. Little worthy of chronicling occurred. In the forenoon of the 3rd a French soldier, who had been brought in a prisoner, took it into his head to make a frantic effort to escape. He got his hand cut off to begin with, and still this did not conquer his repugnance to being a prisoner of war; but a couple of pistol-shots did this very effectually. A little later there was a grand chevy after spies. One was shot down in the rear of the Hôtel Till, and two more were captured in a wood above the town. A villager was torn from his home and his weeping wife. He was a Frenchman born, but a naturalised Prussian; he had, however, been playing the traitor to his adopted country by sending the French information.

In the evening of the 3rd a few of us bombarded-out vagrants walked down till we gained a prominent eminence almost overhanging the valley of the Saar, and from this we had an excellent view of the French dispositions. The sight which we saw surprised us. Away on our right front, on the shoulder of the slope by Stiring, was a large camp with artillery parked close to it. There were tents on the Exercise Platz on the Bellevue heights, with a battery of guns looking out to the right. Far away over the Bellevue, on the crown of the height from which I have described the French as streaming down into the valley lying between it and the Bellevue height,

was a great camp of infantry, occupied obviously by several brigades. What lay in the valley we could not tell, but it was hardly likely that it did not serve to conceal a large force. On the slope above St. Arnual was another camp, but comparatively a small one. For all this we were not unprepared, but we were certainly not prepared for what we saw far away to the left in the direction of Saarguemines. A good field-glass clearly made out that on a broad plateau that must have been beyond Saarguemines, for it was certainly distant fifteen miles, there lay extended a vast camp that could not have been occupied by less than a division. Setting this aside, it may be taken as a fair estimate that not less than 15,000 French troops were within the range of our vision. As I have said, what the valley concealed we had no means of knowing. It might have been empty; it might have held other 15,000 men.

From this coign of vantage it was more apparent than ever what defensive advantages the vicinity of Saarbrück might have afforded had they been utilised. The semi-circular piece of table-land at our feet almost suggested itself as a platform for heavy guns, the fire of which might have altered the issue by playing on the heights by gaining which the French gained the town. All that was wanted as the complement was the cutting down of the belts of trees which encircle the Exercise Platz. Had the fire from guns placed here not succeeded in its object, and

had the French, having occupied Saarbrück and St. Johann, made longer maintenance of the table-land position untenable, both by the road and by the railway were admirable facilities for withdrawal, while the wooded slopes in rear of the table-land might have been held for ever by a few regiments of riflemen well supplied with ammunition. Of course the absence alike of artillery and of riflemen rendered any such disposition an impossibility, and the observation forced from us was that if the Prussians should have to exert themselves vigorously to retake Saarbrück, they might easily have saved themselves the trouble and the cost by never having allowed the French to take the place at all.

One important effect the capture, even if temporary, should have had. The railway from Trèves to Neunkirchen, and thence either to Bingerbrück or through the Pfalz by Homburg and Kaiserslautern, forming a connection with the Baden system, passes through Saarbrück, or rather through St. Johann. As a line skirting the frontier, it was of much the same value to Germany as was to France the Saarguemines-Hagenau line, which Lieutenant von Voight had cut a few days previously. It seemed incomprehensible that if the French were to be driven out of Saarbrück, they should go without cutting this communication. Yet not only did they do so, but they left intact the great viaduct by which the line leading from Saarbrück to Metz crosses the Saar, and so did the

Germans a better turn than if they had evacuated the Spicheren without a fight.

On the 4th there was a strange pause in the military operations, and some of us dwellers in the Hôtel Till took advantage of the lull to pay a visit to Saarbrück. The wise man who said in his heart that all men are liars might have lived in our neighbourhood. One hour the story was that the French had evacuated Saarbrück and were in retreat, the next that they were in full march inland, and that we should do well to pack up our kits and be off. Great formalities were reported as requisite to enable us so much as to essay the task of reaching Saarbrück. We had to leave behind our cards, our authorisations and our money, in case of falling into the hands of the French, and being both made prisoners of war and robbed. All that we were to take were our passports. Then we had to visit the burgomaster and obtain from him his written sanction—with the official seal, of course—vouching for us as being harmless and "unsuspicious" individuals. The worthy burgomaster granted this readily, and we left him with thanks, fighting our way out from his door through a bevy of women whose husbands had been drawn for the Landwehr, and who were clamouring for some means of earning their bread. We had not gone a quarter of a mile when we came on a halted detachment of cuirassiers, whose commanding officer gave us a voucher to carry me through his outposts, and

told us he supposed we should have to enter St. Johann under a flag of truce. To our surprise we found not a Frenchman in all St. Johann. I went to my old hotel, where I found interim repairs already executed, and everything in its usual condition. Occasionally there were little squalls of firing between the French from above Saarbrück and the Germans, who, in scattered parties, were in St. Johann; but the townsfolk had become familiarised to the sound of the shots, and never so much as troubled to turn their heads. Nevertheless, in these occasional trivial affairs lives were being lost and plucky things were being done. Just as we came in two of the Black Hussars made a dash to cross the old bridge into Saarbrück, not knowing whether there were Frenchmen over the way or not. A French piquet was in the Schloss Platz, and a few of the men under a sous-officier, ran down the slope to the bridge head to have a crack at the hussars. When these saw the red legs coming, they went about and rode back, chased on to the bridge by the latter. One of the hussars' horses fell and threw its rider. As he lay prostrate the French sous-officier sprang forward, his sword upraised to strike the hussar as he rose. The gallant horseman, however, was on his legs with one bound, with another quick movement he levelled his slung carbine, drew the trigger, and the sous-officier was a dead man. A couple of Frenchmen sprang forward to avenge the fate of their officer; but meanwhile

from the St. Johann side a couple of German infantrymen had covered them, and as these two fired one Frenchman fell. This affair angered the French, who maintained for some twenty minutes a spattering fire at everything living that showed, but without effect.

We were again led to believe in St. Johann that if we wished to get across into Saarbrück it would be necessary to appear with a flag of truce, and forward to the French officer in command there a written request for permission. As we walked on one of us had a walking-stick and pockethandkerchief all ready. But we got on the new bridge, and no French sentry was visible; we crossed it, and never a Frenchman was to be seen. We reached the Platz and the post-office, and there was no more appearance of French troops than there is in the neighbourhood of the Horse Guards at guard mounting. I had been told that General Frossard was living at the Post Hotel. The people there laughed in my face when I asked the question. We traversed several streets before encountering any Frenchmen, but at length in a back street, we came upon a batch of the red-legged, blue-coated gentry. Harmless enough they looked, as they came out of a baker's shop with the long loaves under their arms, grinning from ear to ear. A *gasthaus* was full of them, sitting drinking Rhine-wine and water. I went in and sat down as a listener. The men by their dialect were chiefly from Alsace and Lorraine, districts in

which there is a very large German admixture. Their conversation was *de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis*, save and except politics, national or international. The townspeople confidently alleged that these Alsace and Lorraine men were with Germany at heart, but they were not so sanguine as to this after Spicheren.

After keeping the Frenchmen company for a while we paid a visit to the Saarbrück hospitals. There were very few men desperately wounded. The horsemen had been chiefly hurt about the legs, the infantry soldiers about the arms or through the shoulder-parts which would be likely to be exposed by a man taking a tree as his cover. The hospital arrangements were on the whole very good, with one exception. The windows were all shut, and the rooms in consequence smelt close and stuffy, and the atmosphere was impregnated with sour tobacco smoke. Why a free circulation of air should not have been insisted on was the more remarkable, since the treatment in almost every case was the use of ice. With few men in a ward and clean recent wounds, ventilation is not so great an essential; but it struck me, were the wards crowded in hot weather by men with sloughing wounds hospital gangrene would inevitably arise. The long corridor in Scutari hospital would have been a pestilential place, but for Miss Nightingale's insistance on the freest ventilation. I did not observe that any disinfecting fluid was used in the Saarbrück hospitals. It was

here that I first saw men wounded by the chassepot, and one could not fail to remark what a beautiful wound that firearm makes. It was reported after Mentana that a chassepot bullet made but a small orifice on entering, but that from its gyration it scooped at its exit a trumpet-like mouth. But here I saw stripped the wound of a man who had been shot through the shoulder, and it was impossible for a non-scientific man to tell whether the bullet had struck in front or rear. The people of Saarbrück were behaving to the wounded with great devotion. Several of the citizens had wounded soldiers in their houses, whom they preferred keeping there to sending them to the hospitals.

"Rümschöttel," mayor of St. Johann, was a good German, and a wise and sagacious man. We found placarded at every street-corner the following intimation from him :—

"Looking to the interests of our town, I feel called upon to request my fellow-citizens to avoid laying violent hands upon any French soldiers, but to leave such duty to our troops. It is also the duty of every well-behaved citizen to endeavour by all means in his power to prevent any such occurrence." Placards of a similar tenor, but uniformly couched in less simple and plain language, one got familiar enough afterwards in the course of this war; but never more was there occasion for the mayor of a German town to sign such a document. The unpleasant

but necessary duty ever fell by the force of events to the lot of a French functionary. I am not without suspicions that Rümschöttel's sage counsels were not taken in all cases, for the townspeople had their backs considerably up, especially the women, who fiercely resented the somewhat free manners of the French soldiers. But if the civilians were commanded to hold their hands, the troops to whom the mayor grimly alluded were displaying remarkable sagacity and alertness in "cutting out" any straggling Frenchmen. As we came into the town, we had met several prisoners being escorted into the country. General Frossard, on the evening of the attack, had sent for the mayor, and told him that his orders were very strict against straggling and marauding, and that if any cases occurred the citizens were to take the numbers displayed on the caps of the men so committing themselves, and report the same, when the fellows would be severely punished. On the whole, the Frenchmen were reported as behaving themselves pretty well, and paying honestly enough in most cases. A brewery had, however, been laid violent hands on, and between what was drunk and what was let run, the brewer had lost beer to the value of some 3,000 thalers. It must not be imagined that although the French were not in occupation of St. Johann, it was not quite as much at their disposal as if they had.

In the early morning of the 5th, there was a considerable cannonading from the heights held by the

French above Grosbliffersdorff, and simultaneously came a sudden alarm at Duttweiler, that the French cavalry were advancing in force from St. Johann, driving in the German cuirassier piquets as they came. A dropping fire of small arms in the distance was audible, and the road became alive with additional patrols, but in an hour all was silent again, and we never got to know whether there really was anything in the demonstration.

On Friday morning, anxious to obtain a general authorisation from General von Stülpnagel, of the 5th Division, who was reported to be in command at Neunkirchen and the vicinity, I went by waggon to Neunkirchen for this purpose. Along the route there was no great number of troops visible; indeed, with the exception of stray patrols, we might have been miles distant from the war. But Neunkirchen

"Showed another sight."

All around were battalions of foot regiments and regiments of cavalry, batteries of foot and of horse artillery, fields full of cattle waiting for the military butcher, parks of forage waggons, lanes of bread carts, masses of ambulance waggons, and all the *impedimenta* of a great army contemplating a sustained and prolonged advance. Troops were streaming into the place from all directions, notably horse artillery. I watched the entrance of three batteries of this arm of the service, and I confess I was disappointed by their appearance, remembering the

dash and carriage of our English horse artillery. The men seemed to want vivacity, their uniforms were plain, the horses were inclined to be soporific, and altogether there appeared to be a want of smartness about them compared with our own Royal Horse Artillery. It remained to be proved, as it was the next day, how truly serviceable were the plain-looking men and horses.

Having obtained my authorisation with a courtesy on the part of the Prussian staff such as I have almost invariably met with from that body, I retired quietly to my quarters, with the intention of enjoying a good night's rest, from which, for two or three nights before, I had been debarred. A staff officer occupying the same quarters was good enough to furnish me with some details of the positions occupied by the first and second Armies, which sufficed to indicate very clearly that an invasion of France was imminent. The 1st Army, consisting of the 7th and 8th Corps, was advancing on the Saar, through the southern extremity of the Lower Rhine Province, mainly in a section of country having for its western boundary a line drawn northward from Saarlouis, for its eastern the frontier of the Pfalz. The 7th Corps (Zastrow) had the right wing, the left consisted of von Göben's 8th Corps. The 1st Corps (Manteuffel), which was also to form part of the 1st Army, had not yet caught up with the advance. He had not particulars as to the dispositions of the 1st Army during the night between the 5th and 6th of

August, but those I afterwards obtained as follows :— Zastrow had his head-quarters in Lebach, and was to march next morning (the 7th) to Dilsburg. The right division of the 7th Corps, the 13th (Glümer) bivouacked in and around Puttlingen, feeling away further right toward Derlen and Knausholz. This was the right flank of the 1st Army. Glümer's orders were to advance on the 6th to the Saar at Völklingen and Rockerhausen. Kamecke, with his division (the 14th), spent the night in the vicinity of Guchenbach, with his advanced troops close up on Saarbrück. The bulk of the division was not timed to reach the frontier before the 7th. The 8th Corps stood still further back. The halting place on the 6th for its leading division, the 16th (Barneckow), had been fixed at Fischbach, and the 15th (Weltzien), still further in the rear, had its billet for Holz. Thus far as regards the 1st Army. The 2nd Army, starting from its rendezvous at Mayence, was swarming down all over the Pfalz. Lieutenant-General Alvensleben had the right flank of it with the 3rd Corps,* and it with the 5th Cavalry Division (Rheinbaben), which was employed in covering the right flank and the front, was the only part of Prince Frederick Charles' command engaged in the fight of Spicheren. As regards its dispositions, my staff officer, since he belonged to one of its divisions, could naturally speak with greater exactitude.

* Gustave von Alvensleben who commanded the 4th Corps is a full general.

He believed Rheinbaben's horsemen were already in Saarbrück, and they were permeating all the country intervening between that town and Alvensleben's infantry, while they were also covering the left front of the 1st Army. This disposition brought Rheinbaben *en rapport* with Kamecke, and it will presently appear to what effect the dashing cavalry officer availed himself of his knowledge of that general's relative proximity. For the rest, the 5th Division, now lying in Neunkirchen, had for its morrow's itinerary a route that would bring it to Duttweiler and Rentrisch, both villages, about five miles to the north of Saarbrück, and it was to be temporarily succeeded in its occupation of Neunkirchen by the 6th Division (Buddenbrock)—the next link in the great chain cable that was to be warped out of the Pfalz over the frontier into Frankreich. But Stülpnagel, although himself spending the night in Neunkirchen, had already projected his antennæ on the road he was to travel on the morrow—not alone such feelers as the stout squadrons of Rheinbaben, but also the 9th Infantry Brigade, commanded by the gallant Döring. That brigade had its bivouac for the night on the slopes to the south of Duttweiler, while at least one regiment of the 10th Brigade (the 52nd) was forward also on the southern road, with its night halt in St. Ingbert. Every disposition indicated the proximity of a grand and methodical concentration in the Saar valley, with Saarbrück for its

centre; but there was an absence of urgency in the arrangements that certainly gave no earnest of belief in the imminence of a battle.

I make no apology for interpolating here the following description of the battle of Spicheren furnished to me by a Prussian gentleman who enjoyed exceptional advantages both for seeing the incidents of the fight and for obtaining accurate information as to its details. He had been educated as a staff officer, and had served in that capacity in the war of '66; and having temporarily quitted the military profession, had hurried down to Saarbrück with intent to join, at his own charges, some cavalry regiment in which there might be a vacancy for an officer. When Spicheren was fought he had not yet been posted to any appointment, and was therefore free to devote himself wholly to observation, while he could ask questions and go unchallenged to positions not to be thought of by persons without his advantages. I have taken pains to test his facts, and being fully impressed with their accuracy, have used no freedom with them, although I have ventured to take some little liberty in rendering his language.

"In the early morning of the 6th, about four o'clock, I was aroused by the bugle blast, and an hour after came the quick march of soldiers on their way to the front. A couple of regiments passed towards the railway station; another regiment started along the high road.

Among the troops there was no confusion, but certainly no want of alacrity. A visit to the railway station showed me that, with a couple of battalions in waiting, and no train expected other than indefinitely, the railway afforded a very precarious means of transit, so I returned and got a place in a waggon, in which, after breakfast, I started for Saarbrück by the southern road. Presently we passed the infantry, striding along manfully, and I had not gone six miles when I heard in the distance the rattling sound in the still morning air, which no man who has ever heard it can mistake for anything else than the noise of moving artillery. By this time I was through St. Ingbert, where the 52nd were halting with stacked arms, and soon after, at a turn of the road, our waggon was overtaken by two batteries of artillery, coming along at a swinging canter. The driving boy entered into the spirit of the thing, and I offered him double fare if he would only keep up with the horse artillery. He tried it right manfully, but the waggon was clumsy, and so was the harness; and in the ascent, at the slope leading to Scheidt, he brought his team to a standstill and struck. Spite of his remonstrances, I got the off horse out of his harness, and, mounting the animal bareback, set off in pursuit of the artillery. I overtook them a little beyond Scheidt, where they had halted for a few minutes to give the horses their wind, and found

that they belonged to Stülpnagel's division, and that they had been making haste to overtake infantry that was in their front. Hurrying on (for by this time it was nearly eleven o'clock) I overtook, just as the Saar valley at St. Arnual opened up, the tail of a part of Döring's brigade, which that officer had brought forward on a reconnaissance. The head of the column was already engaged. Looking over the meadow toward St. Arnual, I could see how the ditches and hedges athwart it were lined sparsely with very energetic skirmishers. The French had a battery outside the village, sweeping the crossing of the stream, and the guns were playing on the road by which Döring's men were débouching into the open. His skirmishers, by the heady way they pressed forward, seemed eager by themselves to carry St. Arnual, and turn by the manœuvre what was evidently the point on which rested the left flank of the French. Away on the right, Saarbrück seemed the centre of a pandemonium. On the Exercise Platz shells were bursting, and it seemed as if batteries were in action on the height; but this, as it turned out, was not the case. All up the slope leading from the town towards the Exercise Platz were heard the crack and seen the smoke-puff of the needle-gun, as the German infantrymen pressed on to the summit. But in our own immediate front we had quite enough to engage our attention. Stülpnagel's artillerymen had unlimbered, and were

blazing into St. Arnual and the French. Suddenly the latter gave ground. Their guns limbered up, and their infantry melted away backward into the wood. Certainly it was not wholly the German fire that caused this sudden retreat; some order must have come from head-quarters. No matter what was the cause of it, the German horse artillery were in motion again like a flash of lightning. Through the river dashed the guns, sending up the spray in jets, on to the turf with a strain and a bound, and then with a loosened rein into St. Arnual! Here there was another brief stand, then another limber up, and the horse artillery at a sweeping gallop passed round the St. Arnual bluff out of my sight, whether into the valley beyond or to climb the 'Winterberg' I could not tell.

"For my part, I rode into Saarbrück on my bare-backed steed, which I handed over to the 'stallknecht' of the Reinischer Hof, in St. Johann, to be claimed by his owner. Upon the railway-station esplanade I found, in the persons of one or two dead soldiers, the evidence that the battle had extended thus far. On the bridges joining St. Johann and Saarbrück lay others, and the townsfolk were attending to the wounded. At the head of the old bridge stood a French gun, a trophy, so far, of conquest. The steep slope up to the Exercise Platz had evidently not been taken without some fighting, although it had been held only by some straggling outposts of Frossard's rear-guard belonging to the Division Vergé.

The French had obviously not been idle during the days in which they had occupied the heights overlooking Saarbrück. A continuous line of entrenchment had been thrown up across the crest, with earthworks of more importance for stronger infantry detachments at intervals. But it was evident that no serious attempt had been made to hold this hither line. Indeed, as I learned in Saarbrück, the brigade or division (whichever it was) that had held the heights and plateau behind it had fallen back everywhere on the previous night but one. On the 5th Rheinbaben's patrols, pushing forward after their manner, had discovered how feebly the Exercise Platz was held, and early on the morning of the fight their explorations had not only satisfied their leader that it had been almost wholly deserted under cover of the darkness, but had impressed him with the conviction that Frossard was beginning a retrograde movement, which should include the abandonment of the yet more advantageous position on the Spicheren Berg and the elevated ground about Stiring with the entrenched position across the valley, stretching like a curtain between the two strong flank-positions." Whether Rheinbaben was not too sanguine, or at all events premature in this conclusion, is a question that doubtless would have occasioned more controversy if the issue of the fight that ensued mainly upon it had been different. "He lost no time in dispatching the intelligence to General Kamecke, who, as commanding

the division nearest to the scene of action, at once took upon himself the responsibility of ordering an attack on what it appears certain he considered was but the enemy's rear-guard. He sent back notice of his intention to Zastrow, altering by the tidings the leisurely character of that general's advance on Dilsburg. Kamecke himself, with characteristic impetuosity, galloped on to overtake his leading brigade (the 28th), which had got close to Saarbrück, when he caught up with it. Without losing a moment, Kamecke pushed Rheinbaben's horsemen up the slopes to the Exercise Platz, covering the intervals between the roads with skirmishers, thrown out from the heads of his infantry columns, while some of his artillery unlimbered on the St. Johann side of the stream, and plied the plateau of the Exercise Platz with shell-fire until the advance of the cavalry and infantry compelled a cessation. It was while this was going on that Döring's reconnaissance reached the valley opposite to St. Arnual. I afterwards learnt that he sent the battalions composing it down the river to support Kamecke's direct attack.

"As I passed through Saarbrück, and took my way up the winding road to the Exercise Platz, it was already past eleven. Woyna's infantry brigade (the 28th) and Rheinbaben's cavalry were already over the ridge and striking steadily down into the valley intervening between it and the Spicheren Berg and the French position. Hurried movements, executed by large bodies

of men, were visible through the glass all along the latter. Streams of soldiers were pouring over the horizon, and rushing down to line the entrenched edge of the bastion-like Spicheren. On the little quarterdeck-like plateau, just behind, the batteries had already got into position, and the shells were dropping fast among the Woynas and Rheinbabens as they pushed forward into the valley. Other batteries had opened fire also from a little eminence to the French left of Stiring. These did not have it all their own way. Four batteries Kamecke had already got into action—three aligned with the trees on the Forbach margin of the Exercise Platz, one on the other side of the Saarbrück-Forbach road. The fire of these was concentrated on the Spicheren Berg, while already down in the valley one heard the rattle of the musketry fire, and now and then came the sharp ping of a chassepot bullet.

"At the mouth of the scooped-out cross-road where it joins the main road opposite the Bellevue beerhouse, sat Kamecke on horseback, not quite so cool, perhaps, as the circumstances demanded. With abrupt gestures and jerky messages he was hurrying up his division to the attack. The long columns strained up the steep hill in extra quick time, the men puffing and blowing as the top was gained, and as the battalions marched down the further slope and took ground right and left of the main road across the valley. Here the young soldiers

got their baptism of fire, and the veterans of '66 had recollections freshened that might have faded into dimness as the years of peace had rolled over their heads. For now, not alone over their heads, but into their ranks, hurtled the angry shells, the jets of white smoke and the temporary disruption of the formation showing ever and anon where one had burst. The leading battalions lay down while the deployment was in progress, but still the shells spared them not. Kamecke's artillery as it came up in detachments took ground right and left, some of it on the height, some batteries rattling down the road and opening fire on the slope at shorter range. One or two batteries were pushed out to the right hand corner of the Exercise Platz to give reply to the French batteries that were in so energetic action on the knoll flanking Stiring. But artillery, infantry, and cavalry—for all were now within range of vision from the corner of the Exercise Platz overhanging the steep road—made up what seemed full too weak a force to cope with what was before it; nor was there any indications of the speedy advent of supports.

"Presently there was a move down in the valley. The Woynas (28th Brigade) were heading away to the German right front to engage the French left resting on Stiring. The gallant von Francois, one of a race of soldiers, himself that day to meet a soldier's death, led his stout Westphalians of the 27th brigade direct on

that abrupt mountain mass that frowned out upon the plain, its summit already marked by the fringe of white smoke from the chassepots of the Frenchmen lining the entrenchment. There were French skirmishers in the bottom of the valley and on the little foothold places on the precipitous incline. On the level the Westphalians sent these back as if they too had been smoke. But it was no fair stand-up fight man to man. From the top of the Berg chassepot, mitrailleuse, field-gun concentrated on the on-marching battalions their powers of destruction. With a steady, rather slow, step they pressed onward constantly, leaving behind them on the plain a terrible proportion of their number. The slowness of the pace was characteristic.

"The German is a man of method and of stubborn pith. Under this death-hail the dressing seemed as systematic as on the parade at Düsseldorf, the touch of man to man as accurate. Ever as a shell crashed through a company, or the mitrailleuse opened a lane and strewed it with dead and wounded, the men flanking the gap closed in with a grim coolness which impressed one with the conviction that men who could act so could not be beaten. When the foot of the Berg was reached, the pace quickened and the formation broke. It was now like the forlorn hope of a besieging army storming a breach rashly reported practicable. Men scrambled upwards and forwards anyhow. The officers threw themselves from their horses, and took perforce to

climbing on foot. Now the leader on a rugged pathway would go down, and, as he rolled backward, he would tumble his followers with him in pell-mell confusion. Officers were seen throwing forward their swords, men their needle-guns, and clambering up after their weapons on their hands and knees. There were little protected liebys here and there, and under these shelters the men packed as you may have seen sheep huddle before a high wind with a snow-drift borne on it. Thither crept, too, the wounded out of the fire that spared them when wounded no more than when they had been hale fighting men. Then when the sound men had caught their wind again, they would dash out, and make another convulsive scramble upward, ever upward. On the brink you might see the Frenchmen bending over the lip of the crest to get more purchase with their downward aim. A mitrailleuse was balanced on the edge by men clinging to the wheels and the trail, while its honeycomb-like muzzle went down, pointing among the strugglers, its butt end high in air. Kamecke had asked men to do an impossibility. There are parts of the Spicheren, notably that part just on the left of the extreme bluff nearest Saarbrück, which are not to be surmounted without scaling ladders. Von Francois's men were brought to a standstill. There was no alternative but to fall back. Fortunately there was no necessity for a retreat right athwart the valley. Out of its centre there rise several

low detached mamelons not of sufficient elevation to give any dominance as against artillery on the Spicheren Berg, but affording better positions for batteries than the plain itself, and furnishing cover behind which troops might enjoy at least a partial protection. Two of these bear the names respectively of the Galgenberg (Gallows-hill) and the Folster Höhe, while behind the latter is some broken ground, with a house or two and some water, the spot bearing the name of the Drathzug. On to these two little eminences the artillery of Kamecke's division had been hurried forward to attempt some support and distraction for Francois's brigade, and when the latter had to cease its bootless efforts to carry the Spicheren, it fell back to reorganise itself behind the knolls on which the gunners, themselves suffering severely, were plying the enemy with shrapnel-shells. Kamecke's cavalry had drawn forward in the valley, behind the shelter afforded by the Gallows-hill and the Drathzug, strengthened by two regiments of hussars from Rheinbaben's cavalry division. As the 27th Brigade drew back sulkily, the French skirmishers dashed down from the plateau, eager to hang on the skirts of the retreating Westphalians. There are two steep country roads that get down from the summit into the valley by a series of slants and zigzags, and these were extensively utilised by the French skirmishers, who pushed down even into the valley taking advantage of what cover was available, as

ever and anon Francois's men turned savagely at bay. But the skirmishers' *bon quatre d'heure* was very short. From behind the Gallows-hill dashed out right and left the keen-sabred troopers of the 11th and 13th Hussars. Galloping through and round their friends, they were on the Frenchmen like a thunderbolt, and the tirailleur-nimbleness of the plucky little Frenchmen availed but little not a few of them. So hot was the fury of the Hussars that they recklessly charged the Berg that had broken the hearts of the infantrymen. They were not long in discovering that their riding-school lessons did not include practice in crag-climbing, and they went back wiser men than before; while to some it was not vouchsafed to apply the experience in after-life. But the sections which formed themselves on the more westerly road up the heights saw before them a track which looked practicable. With mad valour the blue troopers dashed on and up, strewing the road with living débris as they advanced. How near the summit one at least of them must have got I never knew till next day, when I saw a dead hussar and a dead horse tumbled over into a ravine three-fourths of the way up. I saw them ride up. I never saw any of them ride back.

"While the 27th Brigade was re-forming under cover of the guns, Woyna, with the 28th Brigade, having struck away to the left by the Folster Höhe, was steadily fighting his way up toward Stiring, on which the French

eft flank leant apparently in considerable strength. His troops had fair cover in the broken woodland on either side of the railway and the mill-dams, while the railway cutting, deep as it is in places, and not straight for a long enough distance to be raked, also afforded opportune protection. He had, however, to fight every step of the ground, amid a terrific shell-fire that set alight to a terrace of workmen's houses on the western side of the railway, that seemed to have been temporarily occupied by the German troops. But Woyna's progress was terribly slow, and the French fire never slackened." What his losses were, the journeyer on the railway may yet form a vague conception as he looks out upon the numerous green hillocks in the forest glades or the little clearings. There is a little signal-house on the railway that must have been the focus of a fearful fire. No shells had struck it, but when I saw it the day but one after the battle I could not find a space the size of this page which did not show the easily-read print of the impact of a bullet.

" Von Francois's men were not convinced by the lesson they had received as to the inaccessibility of the Spicheren Berg. They must have one more useless essay at the impossible. I do not know whether Kamecke gave the order or not, but the diminished companies came out yet again to the open, and once more breasted the lower slopes of the hill. By this time the fire of the division's artillery, plied as it was unremittingly, had made the

edge of the Berg a very hot place, and the Westphalians were hardly so much torn as they had been on their first attempt. But the French general must have recognised how fatal to him would be their success. They must be repulsed *coûte qui coûte*. So the Frenchmen, standing in the shell-fire, again lined their intrenchment, and leaning over, rained death upon the struggling bearers of the needle-guns. Some of von Francois's men staggered up through the storm, till they reached the shelter of a rock which, overhanging, supports a section of the verge of the sloping plateau above; and there, powerless to go further, and objecting to go back, they cowered in comparative safety, so close under their enemies that they might almost have grasped the muzzles of the chassepots. Von Francois himself was down, a fearful proportion of his officers had fallen, and the brigade had to own itself foiled, and give up what it seemed to have set its heart upon to achieve. But it went no more back behind the guns. These forced the French to hold their hands greatly, and the German infantry men, with a bulldog-like stubbornness, lay down among the furrows and by the hedgerows along the foot of the Berg. If they could not carry it, at least they would not leave it.

"It was now close on three o'clock, and Kamecke must surely, after the example of one greater than he, have been looking often and often at his watch, and muttering that would to God night or Zastrow would come. But

there were succours nigher at hand than any Zastrow could bring. As it came toward its halting ground at Fischbach, the cannon-thunder came wafted on the wind to Barneckow's division. Von Göben was on in advance of his corps; von Göben, to whom the *Kanonendonner* was ever sweet music. There was no halt for the 16th Division this long summer day. By two the mazed people of Saarbrück saw with joy their old friends of the 40th, as the staunch Hohenzollerns hurried over the bridge to get on to the heights where they had already tasted blood. Von Göben rode on to the Exercise Platz, and took in the situation at a glance. It was truly a critical one. The 40th he sent straight out into the plain, to support the broken left flank of the 27th Brigade, and rode on himself to the Gallows-hill to take the command out of Kamecke's hands in virtue of his superior rank. The 40th Regiment was as yet all that the 8th Army Corps had to say for itself, if we except von Göben: but other troops than Barneckow's division had heard the cannon-thunder. By half-past two there was streaming round the shoulder the mass of Döring's brigade, the 9th, of the 5th Division (Stülpnagel), summoned from its bivouac by Duttweiler when its general had found that his reconnaissance was the road to a battle. It had already done some fighting about St. Arnual, and had established the fact that the right flank of the French was now in the forest of Spicheren, which clothes the

somewhat less abrupt slopes from the precipitous part of the Berg eastward in the direction of Berbach. As Döring advanced, he fell into position on the left of the 40th Regiment, with his front looking into the dark forest that rose before him. Other advance regiments of the 5th Division presently reached him, and the aid, no great thing as it was, looking at the work to be done, gave relief to the 14th Division, engaged as it had been right up to the hilt. The attack on the Berg was renewed but in part, the 40th undertaking the less precipitous section lying next the wood of Spicheren, while Döring's regiments, under cover of a fire from part of the artillery of the 3rd Corps, which had just come up, went straight at the forest itself. The 40th had traditions of storming prowess. It had shown the way over the fortifications of Düppel; but the Spicheren Berg was harder than had been Düppel. What fighting it was to be sure, all along from the nose of the bluff eastward to the right verge of the wood! Three times did the Germans charge the hill and the wood—scarcely less a hill; three times did the French, fighting with a stubborn fury that was of the undegenerate days, hurl them back with a withering fire right in their teeth almost at arm's length. For two stricken hours was the result dubious. But at five Alvensleben came on the ground with fresh supports belonging to the 3rd Corps, and one more attack was joined. Steadily climbed on the 40th up the steep green

slopes. Döring's men were over the trench on the edge of the wood and in among the trees. There is something horrible in the suspense of a fight in a wood. You see little or nothing; there is an occasional flash, and in the casual openings glimpses of troops swaying and heaving, like sea-waves in the chasm of a cavern; then there is an interval with nothing visible but the calm green tree-tops, which mock you when you know that hell is raging below them; and the hell is continually dropping its red-hot coals through the bars of the furnace, in the shape of wounded men who come staggering out from behind the trunks, halting often as they come. How is it to go? Are the blue-coated men you saw go in to be vomited forth again the way they went, with the red-breeched men hot and triumphant on their flanks, plying the devil's pitchfork to hoise them wherewithal outside? or has this Spicheren hell a thoroughfare through it, and are the blue-coated men, having battled through the furnace, to reach the grill on the further side, and draw breaths of cooler air there? The white smoke surges up fitfully through the dark-green boughs of the fir-trees; still the wounded men stagger out, and still the issue is uncertain.

"But if we could not penetrate the secrets of the wood, we might, at all events, watch the course of the Hohenzollerns on its flank. Slowly, and evidently with arduous effort and terrible loss, they pushed on their dogged way.

At length they were over the worst in the point of climbing, and into the worst in point of musketry fire, as they reached a kind of natural glacis before the French entrenchment. Watching them through the glass, one seemed to see the men straightening themselves up and pulling themselves together; then, as it seemed, with one great effort of their muscular loins and hips, they shot forward on to the top of the earth-bank. For one moment it was as if they hung here, and then fell forward, lurching down as it were on the Frenchmen who lined the trench. They say there was no actual bayonet fighting; from behind, it certainly looked as if for a couple of minutes there was a hand-to-hand fight; on the near side the dogged, weighty mass of the men in spiked helmets, leaning forward with a terrible *vis inertiæ;* on the further, a seething, bobbing, gyrating, frantic throng of marionnette-like men in red breeches. The spiked helmets seemed with their sheer weight and irresistible pressure to drive back the red breeches as a masterful wave sweeps the foam before it; and when the berg was won, the wood was won also. Döring's Brandenburgers were not to be flouted by the Hohenzollerns. The wood was theirs, and cleared of French as the latter became aligned with its edge on its western flank. We saw little more for the time of the fight here, but the din that came back to us proved that all was not over on the upland when the Spicheren wood had been taken.

"As we learned afterwards, the French again and again charged the wood with fury, and even once or twice penetrated into it. The Hohenzollerns, dreading lest with the impetuosity of the rush they should be swept bodily back off the plateau, had to seek something at once of ground-anchorage and of cover among the trees. It was impossible for infantry alone to make its way upward and onward on the plateau. The call was for artillery, and artillery came. Two batteries of Stülpnagel's division, that had been firing from before the Winterberg before the duel in the dark began in the wood, limbered up, and made for the rough winding track by the edge of the wood. The drivers were resolute, and the horses were strong. In ten minutes the gunners were at "action front" in the very faces of the French infantry, who had no alternative but to give way, for they had been deserted by their artillery; so, fighting desperately as they went, they fell slowly back, and the Germans pressed on, gradually making the plateau their own. So the French right wing was turned, and the battle of Spicheren virtually won.

"Certainly on the German right there seemed little indication that such a result had been achieved. Zastrow, with part of the reserve artillery of his corps, had come over by the railway bridge on to the battle-field at half-past four, superseding in his turn Von Göben in right of seniority. Zastrow had been trying strategical experiments with his 13th division (Glümer), which was out of

the hunt, away by Völklingen, marching along, as we afterwards learnt, in blessed unconsciousness of what was going on so near it, the wind setting the other way, till an aide-de-camp from Zastrow, who reached Glümer about five o'clock, gave him a new direction and a stimulus to speed. But Zastrow had not at hand available troops of his own corps. The quiet and prompt Alvensleben (who was also already in the field) had got up nearly the whole of Stülpnagel's division, and there were regiments available to participate in offensive action on the right, as well as to carry the Spicheren wood on the left. All the afternoon Woyna had been fighting doggedly forward till he had edged the French out of Stiring, and well across the valley from their entrenchments behind the iron-works of Stiring Wendel, on to the Kreuzbach, which may be called roughly a prolongation of the Spicheren-berg toward Forbach. Zastrow sent on a brigade of infantry and some artillery to attack this strong position; but the French, whose left had been strengthened by a division of Bazaine's corps, anticipated the offensive, coming down in great force into the valley, no doubt with a design to cover Forbach at least for a time. The German artillery, which was now in strong force about the railway, played terrible havoc with this effort on the part of the French, who, however, persevered with a tenacity that seemed to partake of despair. At length Stülpnagel's infantry were sent forward to

precipitate the action, and this they did, by driving the French up the Kreuzbach, and storming it on their heels. This movement turned the French left on its part, so that while they were being hustled backward over the plateau on the right, they were being all the more shoved on to it from the Kreuzbach toward Spicheren and Alsting from the left. The confusion of the cross streams must have been immense, especially as the roads along which retreat alone was possible were by no means either good or plentiful. While Frossard held Forbach he had the key to the main *chaussée* to Metz; but Zastrow's strategetical experiment turned up a trump in the twilight. Glümer's division (the 13th), bearing round from Völklingen by Ludweiler and Rosseln, came down upon Forbach from a due westerly direction, and frightened the French out of it with hardly any fighting." The other divisions had got all the mauling; Glümer's had had the furthest marching, and now came in for the heaviest loot; for the French evacuated Forbach in hot haste, and, after an absurd attempt to wreck the station and its multifarious contents by sending an engine to run amuck down a siding and on to the station, left everything as it stood, from scents and *bonbons* to flour and munitions of war.

"There was in the dusk a kind of miscellaneous fighting all across the plateau, about the villages of Spicheren, Alsting, and Etzling. The French seemed never to know

when they were beaten. Although regimental formation had become for the most part shattered in the mass which acted as the rear guard, detachments and groups fought passionately. It seemed as if the fight was to last all night. It became impossible in the dusk to distinguish between friend and foe. The French were reported to have sustained serious injury through a blunder of this kind, in which countrymen slew countrymen. The Prussians adopted the expedient of shouting "Hurrah Preussen!" and the hoarse, deep-throated cry ever and anon came backward from out the din, the smoke, and the fire-flashes with a strange weird effect. At length these detachments and groups either fell back or went down till the front was tolerably clear of Frenchmen. Then their artillery struck in for the last word. It had been got into position about Kerbach to cover the retreat on Puttelange, and was well and staunchly served to the last. The Germans with some little over-confidence, pressed it rather too closely, and then the French infantry yet once more showed how it carried a sting in its tail." It must have been a ragged array that resumed the offensive thus in the darkness, but there is no doubt of the fact that a determined front after a fashion was shown. Yet there might have been some attempt at a pursuit, but that all the German army, with perhaps the exception of Rheinbaben's cavalry division, was jaded with long marching and fighting. So beyond Kerbach,

Frossard was let pursue in peace his disorganised and disorderly retreat. They had left of their goods and chattels in Spicheren, as well as in Forbach. "The firing had not wholly died away till after nine o'clock. As I walked back over the plateau, down the steep, across the valley, and on to the Exercise Platz, I had constantly to pick my way very carefully. It is a dismal sensation to stumble over a dead man. It is even a greater shock to force unwittingly a groan of pain from a poor wounded wretch lying helpless in his blood, waiting for the succour that, come how soon it may, is ever over-tardy. How many, both of dead and of wounded, flecked the brown surface of the heights I could then form no estimate; I only knew this, that the number of both was very great. Spiked helmets and red breeches blended together as closely as if they had been bosom friends all their lives. The hospital corps with their ambulances were swiftly picking up the wounded and carrying them off to be tended. Their organisation seemed excellent. More than once I saw in the pale ray of a moonbeam a female form swathed in black, with the white patch and the cross on the breast, bending over a prostrate form, or flitting ghostlike in the van of an ambulance party." God bless the Sisters of Mercy in a night like this, say I, whether they are Roman Catholic or whether they be Protestant. Christianity on a battle-field can well afford to sink sectarianism. There were days and nights of

bloodshed to come, when no Saarbrück convent should be close by to send out its courageous sisterhood on to the brink of the *Schlachtfeld.*

The Germans had, in all, engaged about 40,000 men, including the division Glümer, and probably Frossard, even with the reinforcement from Bazaine, was not so strong by some 12,000. Deducting Glümer's division, which, although it came under fire, and therefore, strictly speaking, must reckon as being in the field, took no real part in the action, the hostile forces were about equally matched in point of numbers. It is no exaggeration to say that its position represented to the French army a value equivalent to another army of equal strength. The German loss was terrible—over 4,300 men killed and wounded. Nearly all the loss fell on the 14th division, only a portion of the 5th division, and the 40th Regiment. Probably the whole loss falls to be apportioned on a force under 20,000 men, and this would bring out the loss as one in five—an exceptionally heavy per-centage. The loss in officers was by far too heavy on the German side. The French left 2,000 unwounded prisoners in German hands.

The battle of Spicheren was won solely by the stubborn valour of the German soldiers, and by the cannon-thunder. The record of it contains no evidence of the influence of a master-mind over its dispositions and results. General Kamecke was probably justified in his effort to make a

snap-shot for a victory, but certainly he had no right to engage himself so closely and generally as he did, until he had far better assurance than he had that he might reckon on supports when the time should come for him to want them. He might have secured his end, at far less expenditure of human life, by using his division discreetly to keep the French in play on both flanks, instead of abusing it as he did by an effort for the direct storm of such a position as the Spicheren-berg. It does not appear that he had any cognizance of Stülpnagel's ability to come to his support in the opportune moment, or, indeed, that he communicated at all with Alvensleben's corps. What succour he derived from this source—and how invaluable was that succour, the preceding details have demonstrated—came to him from the fortunate circumstance that Döring's reconnaissance in the morning put that officer on the *qui vive*, and from the accident that the wind set in such a direction as to carry the sound of the cannonade into the back country. The responsibility of the day's work, in so far as it was disastrous, rests with Kamecke; and there seems every probability that had the first army—the support which was all that he appears or, indeed, was entitled to have calculated on—constituted the whole available force, the marker in the war-game would have had to score a victory for the German arms between Saarbrück and Forbach on the 6th of August. That Kamecke was not defeated before supports came up,

was owing solely to the stoutness of his Westphalians; and that victory was ultimately achieved was owing to the fact that Stülpnagel and Alvensleben were prompter than was Grouchy in marching on the sound of the cannon. All's well that ends well. The victory had an immense moral effect. It must have been in the light of the experience furnished them at Spicheren that the French huddled backward under the shells of the forts of Metz, without attempting to utilise the many tempting positions for a stand which the configuration of the ground afforded them by the way. General Steinmetz has been erroneously blamed for the waste of life at Spicheren. The fact is that the gallant old soldier was responsible for nothing on the 6th of August, unless it might be for the circumstance that he did not happen to be nearer the front. He did not get into Saarbrück until the evening.

I walked out on the battle-field on Sunday afternoon. All up the steep which rose out of the valley all the way from over against the Exercise Platz to near Forbach, a distance of some four miles, the dead of the German army lay thickly. At the bottom of the steepest place there was quite a fringe of butchery that had rolled downward in obedience to the law of gravitation, a grim alluvial deposit made by the torrent of shot. On the little level shoulders of the steep graves were being made, into which the burial-parties were huddling

"Friend and foe,
In one red burial blent."

Some of the ravines leading on to the height, where it is indented by the bay between the Spicheren-berg and the Kreuzberg, had been the scenes of desperate fighting. In a little gully just at the top of one of these I found a dozen Prussians lying dead, piled one above another in inextricable confusion. Elsewhere they lay as thick. Inside the intrenchments it was the turn of the Frenchmen to be found dead in the greatest numbers. The ditch itself was full of them. For several yards inside the intrenchments it was impossible to step without treading on dead humanity. The fight had been equally deadly all over the plateau, where the corn and grass were trodden into the brick-like ground that was yet in places soft and soppy with blood.

Saarbrück, which had chafed mightily under the presence of the Frenchmen on the heights above them and occasionally in their midst, no sooner saw victorious Germans on the Exercise Platz than it broke out into a spasmodic eruption of flags symbolical of victory, and generally went half crazy with joy. But there was real work for Saarbrück to do in manifestation of its national and indeed human sympathies, and the flags and phlegmatic caperings were only a preliminary outburst. The wounded were to be removed from off the battle-field, as the tide of war surged forward and left its *débris* behind. Right energetically did Saarbrück rise to the occasion. I do not believe there was a man or a woman or a boy or

a girl in all the town who did not help to carry wounded soldiers off the field. The medical arrangements were decidedly defective. No such sudden call on the services of the department had been anticipated, and the staff both of bearers and of surgeons was far from strong enough, nor was there enough of hospital accommodation. The first and the last wants Saarbrück did its best to supply. Into every room of every house, into every shed and outbuilding, were carried wounded men. My hotel was full of them, from the *salle à manger* to the fortress in which Boots cleaned his knives and brushed the clothes. Fifteen poor fellows lay all night on straw in an outhouse without medical aid. In the morning three of them were dead. On Sunday began the transport by railway into the interior of such as could be moved, this being a wise provision for keeping the frontier hospitals available for the wounded in future actions; 2,000 were so sent away on the Sunday and Monday, both Prussian and French, their destinations being the large towns all along the Rhine. As I left Saarbrück the procession to the station was unbroken of litters and hand-ambulances, of pale men with arms in slings, or limping, supported by a couple of sympathisers. One I saw pass in a wheelbarrow.

CHAPTER III.

COURCELLES, SPICHEREN, AND GRAVELOTTE.

If one lingered long in Saarbrück, it became apparent, so rapid was the advance, that he might find himself out of the hunt altogether. Indeed, when I quitted Saarbrück on the afternoon of Tuesday, the 9th of August, I was already in the rear of most of the army of Steinmetz, and behind, likewise, no small proportion of the vast host of Prince Frederick Charles. Instead of tramping to Forbach by the road, I took a final walk over the scene of the battle-field of the Saturday.

By Monday at mid-day all the wounded had been removed and most of the dead buried. The whole of the ground was thickly dotted over with graves. The burial-parties had been pious in those their ministrations to the dead. Few of the mounds but were surmounted with a rude cross, made of a couple of sticks lashed together with a buckle strap. Others were more elaborate, the cross board being flat and having inscribed upon it the number interred, their rank and regiment. Already the townspeople had decorated some of the graves with shrubs and

flowers, but most of the decorations consisted of bayonets and swords stuck in the soil—tokens that soldiers lay below. Friend and foe slept at peace with each other in one grave. The inscription over one of the largest on the first Spicheren height I thought worth copying:—

"Hier ruhen in Gott
29 Preussen und 69 Franzosen."

I walked some distance before I came to an unburied body, but in the little clefts and gulleys leading up to the second Spicheren height they still lay quite thick. There was no difficulty in discovering their vicinity. The corpse of a man slain in battle does not lie for three days exposed to the air and sun without lapsing into decomposition, and some of the bodies were horrible sights. Some could hardly have been known for human—so black and turgid were the features. The deaths had chiefly been from rifle bullets. Most of the Germans bore their death-wounds in their faces and heads, received as they stormed the terrible ascent; the Frenchmen—those who had not perished by the bayonet—were for the most part shot through the body, or had their legs shattered. One scene I never can forget. By the foot of a tree lay two dead German soldiers. It seemed as if they had been removed thither either during or after the fight, while as yet only wounded. Beside them were two pannikins half full of water, and a piece of bread. One, quite a lad, lay in a crouching attitude, his head bent downwards toward the

tree. He had been shot through the head, and the blood had streamed on to his handkerchief and the open pocket-book in front of him. One hand grasped that of his dead comrade, in the other was an envelope. The letter it contained may have blown away, or the lad, in his last agony, may have thrust it in his breast; but the envelope itself was eloquent enough. It was addressed in a female handwriting, and bore the postmark of a little village away near the shores of the Baltic. The writer—mother or sweetheart, I know not—evidently had been the last thought of the lad. Will she come to weep over his grave among the clay-stone crags of the Spicheren? Will he, indeed, have a grave at all? The place was a lonely one, and the straggling cowherd may, months after, have chanced upon a couple of skeletons with arms and belts on the bones.

What a distance over the height had stretched the battle, I never realised until this night. Three miles away from the first bluff of the Spicheren-berg, I found dead French soldiers lying between the drills of a potato-field. And then in the growing darkness I lost my way, and had to plunge through a dense wood growing on a steep slope. There was no road, but I scrambled downward with tolerable freedom, till I stumbled over something and fell at full length. As I stretched forth my hand to raise myself it touched the face of a corpse, cold and clammy with the death-sweat. In the dark solitude of

the wood such a contact, unpleasant at any time, was horrible, and made my blood run cold. It seemed as if everywhere I turned my feet met prostrate corpses. I struck a light, and by its dim rays found myself in the centre of a knot of some half-dozen dead French soldiers. Whether they had been slain simultaneously by the bursting of a shell, or had scrambled into the wood wounded, and died here in each other's company, I know not; I only know that I shuddered at the situation in which I found myself, and then it struck me that one of them moved. Could he be still alive? No, it was but imagination on my part. They were all dead, and sadly wanted burial. Very daintily did I pick my steps down the rest of the wooded slope, but, getting on a rough footpath, I chanced on no more corpses. But I slept very little that night, and when I did I continually dreamed of the group of dead Frenchmen. The indescribable taint of the unburied dead lingered in my nostrils for hours after.

Forbach consists mainly of one chief street, which is rather narrow. A horse falling, in a carriage, would block it up. Somehow German horses do not fall. I watched the constant stream pouring through this narrow street for half a day, and never observed a block, not even a check, for more than five minutes at a time. I do not know what sort of a place Forbach may be in ordinary times—probably a prosperous commercial town;

with me it will ever be associated with semi-starvation and a narrow escape from sleeping in the gutter. In the house of a man who had been named to me in Saarbrück I had secured, as it seemed, quarters of a sort. From these a "Graf" somebody turned me out in order to let in twelve soldiers. I could not in decency object, seeing that the men had not been inside a house for eight days, and if I had it would not have mattered. My aliment for the succeeding twenty-four hours was a glass of liqueur and half a cigar. I spent the night among straw in an outhouse, and was thankful that I had not to take a pitch in the gutter. The soldiers had eaten up everything, drunken up everything, smoked up everything. The people were half starving; but as they starved they rejoiced, for they had charged the soldiers war prices. The commissariat arrangements had hardly yet got into order, but it was plain that even when that should have been the case, the consumption of everything available on the part of the troops would continue. Soldiers on the march are always hungry and thirsty. I wish they had left a little tobacco for an outsider though; it is easier to starve when one's pipe is full.

I was the witness of a little incident in Forbach which tends to illustrate the Prussian thoroughness that is so great a key to success. Strolling down to the railway station to inquire as to the probabilities of a *Militärzug*, I found a divisional general sitting placidly outside the

station entrance, a table by his side and a bottle of wine on it, which he and the Mayor of Forbach were leisurely drinking as they smoked their cigars. Now the divisional general of an English army in the field would have been surrounded by a cordon of orderlies, and have formed the centre of a glittering staff. It would not have been permitted to a mortal of common clay to look upon his glory. This old gentleman—his name I have forgotten—sat drinking his wine without a solitary orderly in waiting, much less a staff officer. The privates and corporals of working parties were passing out and in, clearing the station of French *débris*, and the jolly old fellow now and again exchanged a word with them as they came within hail. Presently there was brought unto him a deputation of the bakers of Forbach, whose attendance he had ordered. Quoth the general to the bakers—"My men are temporarily short of bread; you must each by to-morrow morning turn out so many loaves. You will be paid thirty francs for one hundred loaves, and I shall take no excuse."

You should have heard the Forbach bakers jabber! The great "lord-general" was robbing them outright. They would rather give the bread for nothing. They had wives and children, and rents to pay. Would his Excellency ruin them? And so on. As they stood in the rain gesticulating, they presented a curious contrast to the grizzly German, in his waterproof, calmly smoking

and sipping his wine as if he heard not the din of the terribly fluent bakers. At last they chattered themselves fairly out of breath, and then the old man turned to them with a smile, as if he just remembered their presence. "Go away, my good fellows," said he, "and hold your tongues. I can get good loaves in Deutsch-land, three for a franc, and I'll give no Frenchman any more." And the bakers went away in a perfect torrent of "*sacres*," but for all that to get their ovens in order to do the behests of the laconic old chief. There was no trusting to bungling commissaries here—fellows whom the Duke of Wellington was wont to couple with correspondents in his anxiety to hang. The general knew that an army must be fed, if it is to march and to fight, and he personally saw to the purveyance.

The good folks of Forbach had for the most part remained at home to receive the Prussian troops, but they did not seem any the more for this to love Prussia. They were French to the backbone, but not French of the Napoleonic pattern. They made no secret of their readiness to cry "*Vive la République*" when the time should come; and I may note that the great majority of the French prisoners to whom I spoke, while staunch for France, had no fondness for the Emperor of the French, but openly avowed their preference for a Republic. The Forbach people gave out as the reason why the French army had without resistance been retired on

Metz, that the troops had manifested a discontent which made the Emperor fear to trust them in action.

An allusion to French prisoners of war calls to mind one of the basest calumnies against German humanity that ever malignity invented. It was stated in French journals that both German soldiers and German civilians were cruel and abusive to French prisoners. Never was there a grosser lie. Indeed Germany might be well content to rest her reputation on the testimony of the prisoners themselves. I have seen the people at the railway stations tender the wine-can to the prisoners before the escort. If the escort were served first, I have seen the soldiers composing it pass the pannikin to their charge before drinking themselves. I have seen French wounded carried off the field in regular routine with Germans, and getting their turn of the doctor with religious exactitude. The people of Saarbrück, when they threw open their homes, did not care whether they admitted the wearer of a spiked helmet or of a pair of red breeches. And once I saw a German escort march a French sergeant by a circuitous route round a village, that he might not form an object of attention on the part of the village boys. This was an act of delicate consideration which of itself would refute the calumnious and unfounded statements to which I have referred, and which did not a little wound the feelings of German chivalry.

From Forbach the next stage was St. Avold, to reach which on the afternoon of Thursday the 11th of August involved a walk of some ten miles in the rain, commenced without breakfast and concluded in the most utterly blank prospect of anything to eat, or of any place wherein to sleep. Forbach seemed as full as any town could possibly be, but Forbach was not a patch on St. Avold. All the staff were there, and there, too, was half the army. I had casually heard of a dish of liver down a bye-street, and fondly hoped it would be mine. It was taken by stouthrief and hamesucken from under my nose by a masterful German sergeant of Uhlans, who swore by all the deities of the Saxon Switzerland, from which locality he derived his existence, that he would send a "kugel" through the man that interfered between him and the liver. Empty as I was, I was not eager to have the vacuum filled up by "kugels," and I let him have it with a reluctant sigh. The food and locomotion question, by the way, demands a word or two. In those early days of the war I nourished a pet theory that the best way to do the work on which I was engaged was to be "at large" in the army in preference to being attached to any head-quarters, to carry one's belongings on his back, and do one's locomotion on one's own feet. Beyond question there is a great charm to a strong healthy man in pursuing this system. If you get a bed in a house, good and well; if not, steer for the nearest

camp fire, and you are generally sure of a dip into the kettle and a hunk, savoury if tough, of the mature cow which you saw sedately walking behind a baggage-cart in the morning. If you tire, you can jump on the first waggon that passes; if you see an eminence whence you think there is a view, you can climb it—and you will not count the toil wasted among such scenery as one may see among the vine slopes;—if it rains you get wet; but then when it fairs, and the sun comes out, you get dry again. If there is fighting in the wind, you need not be farther behind than the troops that come up at the double; in short, you are your own master, free to come and to go, without the everlasting incubus of impedimenta and belongings on your mind. But the plan has disadvantages which experience teaches more than outweigh the pleasures. The information which reaches an unattached man is scanty and often inaccurate; a day comes when a gallop is worth anything, and then you miss a horse, and swear to forego gipsying.

Just at dusk on the 11th I strolled up the market-place of St. Avold, opposite to the Post. At an open window, looking down on the busy throng of his soldiers, sat King Wilhelm. The old man was alone; his chin was in his hand, and one could read in the abstraction of his glance that his thoughts were far away. Next morning I saw him under a different guise. For two hours and more he

stood in the market-place, close to the road that bisects in its midst. By his side was Von Moltke—gaunt, thin, shaggy, wiry. Close behind stood Bismarck, seemingly as ready to fight as to make a fool of Benedetti in diplomacy. A few general officers stood around, but there was no semblance of a staff, nor anything like a guard or escort. The Father of his people is a homely man. Interspersed among the generals were the gamins of St. Avold, staring up with eyes of wonder at "*le Roi Prussien.*" A private soldier, in his shirt-sleeves, carrying a loaf in his hand, all but floured his Majesty's elbow, and others stood around, forming a close circle behind the generals. But if King William was homely in his immediate surroundings, those who stood by him were spectators with him of a sight that well might make his cheek flush with pride and emotion. For during the two hours that the King stood on this market place there ceased not to stream past him the army of which he is the chief. Now it was a regiment of white-coated, steel-breasted cuirassiers that came on stately, the ground shaking under the tramp of the great horses as the air vibrated to the sound of the mighty cheer from the deep-chested men. Then a regiment of infantry, three battalions strong, each with its band playing at its head, the men marching eight abreast, and already seasoned by the march and the bivouac, looking fit to do anything and go anywhere. The cheering of the

passing troops was always hearty, but it rose to a shout of proud joy as the regiments came by with ranks already thinned by the desperate storm of Spicheren, and when the King with a wave of his hand saluted them with the cheery, "Morgen, Knappe Jungens!" Hussars, Uhlans, horse artillery, diversified the dense masses of infantry, and so thoroughly serviceable did all appear in every respect, that it would be invidious to comment in particular on the appearance of any. With all the field-officers the King shook hands and exchanged a few words, but he seemed best pleased to look into the enthusiastic faces of the men—his "Kinder"—as they passed. King as he is, he is none the less the soldier. It amused me greatly to hear him reprove a man for being out of step, and another for having his zund-nadelgewehr on the wrong shoulder. No one would have imagined that the upright form and square shoulders carried the load of seventy-three winters.

It is impossible to imagine an army travelling with greater swiftness, and leaving fewer traces behind it, than the Prussian army invading France. The reserve was in Forbach; the army in St. Avold and beyond. For miles between the two places the road I traversed was as clear as in the quiet days of peace. The wave of war had passed, and hardly left a trace behind. The crops were unharmed in the fields on either side of the road, save in the spots where there had been bivouacs on the

previous night; not a soldier or a mark of warfare was visible. Between Saarbrück and St. Avold I saw only two dead horses by the wayside, notwithstanding that some of the waggons had journeyed from near Berlin. If any men had fallen out footsore they must have been brought on somehow, for there were no stragglers. The stores were all close up, and the commissariat now in full working. It was a great catch for the Prussians to have captured at the Forbach station some two million thalers worth of French stores, of which a depot had been formed there.

Our tramp of the 12th was to Marange, a squalid village to the northern front of Falquemont, near which the King had his head-quarters for several days. We were pushing on after Steinmetz, knowing something of the dash and daring of that seasoned old warrior. Everybody was asking what could have become of the French army, thirty thousand men of which passed through Marange in headlong retreat the day but one after the battle of Spicheren. It was noted that there was hardly a foot of ground between St. Avold and Marange that might not have been held to advantage against an invader. St. Avold itself stands in the throat of a gullet. On the Metz side of it the valley opens out into a fine plain with a large château on a mamelon in its centre, a noble key to a splendid position, and behind, shutting in the valley from the French side, swells a great sloping

ridge from the summit of which artillery might have operated with overwhelming advantage. Between Marange and Bionville another great hog-backed swell, the *beau ideal* of a battle position for the resistance of invasion; but it was crowned by Prussian bivouacs, and the French,—well, when you asked anybody in authority where they were, he would give a laugh and a little nod, and ask you for a light for his cigar.

From a hut in Marange to a château in Bazoncourt, a village a little behind Courcelles, and on the northern side of the little river Nied, was our experience of the 13th. Here Bazaine had had his head-quarters for a day or two, when he was sent forward with the 3rd French corps to attempt the rallying of the fugitives from Spicheren. By this time, the 13th, we had gained one of the central divisions of Steinmetz's army, and that commander himself was expected to occupy rooms for the night in the château of Bazoncourt, where meanwhile the officers of a dragoon regiment had located themselves. This château, the property of a certain Baron de Courtier, was a fine specimen of a French country house. The reception rooms were fitted up with great splendour in the Louis Quatorze style. They had been left just as they were occupied by the family, and the half-finished sketches and dainty needle-work of the young ladies were lying about just as they had been dropped when the route came for the retreat to Metz.

Upstairs were long corridors, off which opened any quantity of bed rooms, all left in trim order, and between the snowy sheets of which dragoon officers, weary from frequent bivouacs, had stretched their weary frames the previous night. Bric-à-brac clocks, bijouterie, and all manner of tasteful nick-nacks adorned the pretty chambers; in one hung a watch, which its owner had left behind in his or her hurry. The corridors were hung with old family pictures, portraits of men in armour, gaunt and sinewy with the training that won them renown in the tournament—with chevaliers with elaborately curled hair hanging over their shoulders, ruffles and frills of Valenciennes lace, court swords, and jewelled snuff-boxes. And the gallery of female portraits was equally rich, from the straight-robed lady of the old régime to the luscious dame, all powder and patches, of Louis the Great, and the sprightly damsel of the Regency. The library door stood open, and a volume of Thomas Carlyle's "Life of Cromwell" lay open side by side with a French translation of one of James's novels. I wrote a letter at a desk at a window in the corridor, in the interior of which I found a family album, a bundle of maps and guide-books—the relics of a family tour through Switzerland,—and a quantity of exercises in English, presumably by the young ladies, corrected by the pencil of the governess. At the rear of the château was a beautiful garden, adorned with flowering annuals,

trailing sprays of fuchsias, and greener grass than I had hitherto ever seen in France; and in pretty retreats were rustic seats and fantastic tables.

When the Baron and his family ran away—a very foolish thing for them to do by the way, for they would have received no annoyance—they had the civility to leave behind them a neat assortment of the ugliest old cook-women it has ever been my lot to see, who did their best to provide for the wants of all comers. The Baron owned all the fertile and warm vineyards that slope upward from the village, and he housed the vintages underneath his château and the esplanade behind it. I found that the quartermaster of the dragoons had administered to the keys of the cellars, from the stores of which he doled forth bottles on properly vouched application. To my solicitation he replied by a bottle of white wine and a bottle of red wine, along with which my companion and myself retired to a shady arbour, and cordially drank the health of the Baron and all his house. He could not have been a bad man, his wine was so good.

At Bazoncourt we were within twelve miles of Metz. The 12th Regiment of Dragoons had scouted the same morning to within sight of Forts St. Julien and Queleu, and had left videttes to observe the doings in the vicinity. The universal belief was that the French were in position to defend the passage of the Moselle between

Metz and Pont-à-Mousson. The centre of their position was set down as being somewhere about Noveant, nearly midway between Pont-à-Mousson and Metz. Steinmetz on the right, Prince Frederick Charles was in the centre, and his head-quarters on the 13th were at Nomeny, considerably to the south of us. The Crown Prince, pushing on from Wörth, was on the extreme left, and rather in the rear, heading right on Nancy. It was expected that there would be a gradual concentration of the widely opened-out front, consequent upon exact knowledge of the French dispositions, and of the locality in which they might have made up their mind to offer battle. The soldiers of Steinmetz were thoroughly confident of victory. They had respected—and perhaps half feared—the French till they tested their calibre on the heights of Spicheren. Since then they made somewhat light of them; and as they penetrated farther and farther into the French territory, asked each other with raised eyebrows, whether a French host could have penetrated thus far into Rhineland without fertilizing the vineyards with its blood.

We missed seeing the battle of Courcelles, baulked by that over-eagerness which so often defeats itself. In the absence of good staff information, and judging solely, therefore, from regimental gossip, which it may be taken as an axiom is never reliable, we came to the conclusion that the impending battle must be fought more to the

south. Early on the morning of the 14th—oh, that we had been less impatient!—my companion and myself, having determined to make towards the centre of the army of advance, quitted Bazoncourt in a south-westerly direction, and walked across the front, keeping at first as close as possible in the track of a party of dragoons, which the day before had marched from Bazoncourt toward Nomeny. Guided only by a rough chart, and destitute of a compass, we found ourselves in what may be called the debateable land between the German advance and the Moselle, to the south of Metz. So long as we were in the track of the dragoons we passed through the frequent villages without molestation, and, indeed, experienced a certain grumpy civility; but when we got into the terra incognita beyond, black looks everywhere met us from the French villagers. Towards midday, getting hungry, we asked a patriarch in a village through which we passed if he could put us in the way of getting any food. Rather sulkily he asked us in, and gave us some sour bread and hard-boiled eggs. As we were consuming this fare he left us, and only returned in order to obtain payment. When we recrossed his threshold we found waiting for us what I suppose was the able-bodied adult population of the village, consisting of about half-a-dozen young men and two hobbedehoys. One of them, acting as spokesman, inquired our business, muttering charges of our being Prussians

and spies. I tried hard to explain to them that we were in the extremest sense of the word non-combatants, showing them a tiny penknife as the most lethal weapon I carried; but they continued to crowd around us threateningly, and I thought for sure every minute they would close. We edged towards a wall, so as to have them only on one side, and then my companion giving the word suddenly altered his tone, and peremptorily ordered them to clear the road. One hulking fellow would not give back, whereupon my friend let fly a straight right-hander from the shoulder that knocked the Frenchman backward into his patrimonial dunghill. The thoroughness and rapidity of the act seemed to dumbfounder his comrades, and we were out of the village before they recovered themselves.

Reaching the village of St. Jure we once more fell in with the spiked helmets, and remained there for the night. In the still night watches we heard the distant din of the artillery fire with which the battle of Courcelles was concluded, and in the morning came scrappy tidings of the bloody victory.

Although I was not a spectator of the battle of Courcelles (or Borny, as the French and indeed some of the Germans call it), I may give a brief sketch of the character of the operations. The German leaders had reason for believing, what we afterwards know was the case, that Bazaine, who had got the command of the French "Army

of the Rhine," was proceeding to attempt the withdrawal of his army from Metz, with intent to retire upon Châlons and form a defensive junction with MacMahon. Weighing him in their own scales, it seemed clear that if he were to put this design into practice with energy and promptitude, he must gain such a start as would frustrate the intended strategetical movement on the part of Prince Frederick of swinging round by the south on the ground beyond the Moselle, and blocking Bazaine's paths of retreat. This was to be baulked at any cost, and the sluggishness of the French general gave Steinmetz an opportunity of which he was not slow to avail himself. There seems no reason to doubt that Bazaine might have marched clean away, if he had but realised the urgency of the necessity, without troubling himself about a strong rear-guard, when he had such a fortress as Metz to cover his retreat. In truth, Bazaine does not seem to have left the corps of Decaën, Ladmirault, and Frossard in the camps where Steinmetz found them, out of any solicitude for the safety of his rear, but simply because he had let his front get clogged in the passage of the Moselle, and was not impressed with the necessity of clearing his feet and getting away quickly from what afterwards proved his prison-house. The fact that on the 14th he fought when he need not, and indeed ought not, is strong proof that he did not realise his position. Had he done so, it would appear that his policy was, instead of trying

to hold the line by Nouilly, Montoy, Colombey, and Mercy le Haut, to get his three corps back under the shelter of the forts of Metz, bustle them over the river and set them to keep the passage of the stream on the south of Metz. Steinmetz could have taken nothing by boring that bullet-head of his against Fort St. Julien or Fort Queleu. His direct march would have been arrested by the stone and iron in his path, and he must have diverged either north or south. The northern route would have been too circuitous, and have disconnected him too far from Prince Frederick Charles; if he had chosen the southward, he would have had to fight for the crossing with Bazaine's rear-guard, while the mass of the army of the latter, escaping the too tardy grapple of Prince Frederick Charles, would have been far on the road toward Macmahon. But everything seemed to work together for the advantage of the German arms. The three rearward French corps Steinmetz found in their camps; he asked them to give them battle that so he might gain time for Prince Frederick Charles, and with chivalrously blind simplicity they complied. They occupied the line of villages I have named, covering Metz to the eastward, when Steinmetz's reconnaissance beat up their quarters. The position, with which I had occasion afterwards to become familiar, presents many advantageous features, but is faulty in a military sense by reason of the abundance of cover for an approaching enemy, and of the number of excellent roads

at his service for bringing up his forces in parallel columns. The French front and flanks were studiedly covered with numerous rifle-pits and trenches. Steinmetz's attack did not begin till shortly before four o'clock in the afternoon. It was initiated by the 1st division (Bentheim) belonging to the 1st Army Corps, which had joined Steinmetz since Spicheren; and by the 26th brigade (von der Goltz) of Glümer's division (the 13th) belonging to the 7th Army Corps. There were strong supports belonging to the 1st and 7th corps behind, about Pange, Domangeville, and Frontigny. The 26th brigade began the attack on Colombey, while Bentheim's men farther to the north pressed up the Saarbrück-Metz chaussée, deploying when at the hamlet of St. Agnan on the vineyards toward Flanville against Montoy and the ravine of La Planchette. The French were so strong on the slopes and in the woods about their position that the German infantry could make no headway, and lost heavily, experiencing, too, now for the first time a foretaste of the idiosyncracies of French fortress guns. Infantry supports came up, but the Colombey-Montoy position was defended with great obstinacy and could not be forced. After the infantry had been engaged without effect for some hours, the horse artillery were galloped up and came into action on the plateau near Noisseville, close to the brewery, with which the siege of Metz made us so familiar, and looking down upon Montoy from the north-east. There were no fewer

than fourteen batteries in position between Noisseville and Flanville, and before the fire from eighty-four cannon the French began to break and give ground. Then the infantry of Bentheim and von der Goltz took advantage of the opportunity, but encountered a warm resistance, and had to fight for every fragment of ground they gained, losing, of course, very heavily. At seven o'clock further supports came up; Pritzelwitz with his fresh 2nd division eager to back up his countrymen of Bentheim's division, and Kamecke with his 14th division, weakened already by the fight of Spicheren, but ready as it had been then to be in the thick of it. Thus the 1st and 7th corps were complete, and drove the French in toward Borny, Vantoux, and Mey. The French right at Mercy le Haut was crushed through an instrumentality that owed its presence to the fact that artillery fire makes a noise. Had air-guns been in use instead or fulminating powder, von Wrangel, marching his 18th division leisurely toward the Moselle, in the southern rear of the battle-field, would not have heard the cannon thunder. His division, forming part of the 9th Army Corps (Manstein), had only crossed the frontier a day or two before, and it belonged to the army of Prince Frederick Charles. But the cannon thunder intuitively turned Wrangel to the right, and about seven o'clock he turned up at Mercy le Haut, and set about throwing back the French right wing. Just before dark the French of Ladmirault's corps made a

strong rally, attacking Wrangel vigorously by Grigy, while they staggered Bentheim on the north and even made him temporarily give ground in the direction of Noisseville and Servigny. But the attempt only caused further bloodshed. The Germans braced themselves up, fresh supports came, and after a fight which lasted long after dark, the proximity of the forts alone compelled the Germans to desist from driving the French farther. As it was, perhaps they came too close to the inanimate defences. There are German graves of the 14th August nearer to Queleu and les Bottes than prudence would seem to warrant; but men flushed with victory are not always wise. The German loss was between 2000 and 3000, and over 4000 wounded French prisoners were taken.

Soon after leaving St. Jure in the morning, we encountered a large body of German troops in full advance toward the Moselle. Accompanying it was the head-quarter staff of General von Alvensleben, from some members of which we learned that the Moselle bank was undefended by the French, and that the Third Army Corps, of which von Alvensleben had the command, was marching straight on Pagny to pontoon the stream near that point, and, crossing, strive to catch up with the left flank of Bazaine, who had that day quitted Metz on his march towards Verdun. Receiving permission to accompany the advance, we therefore went on to

a village called Seligny, where the staff located itself in a handsome château with charming grounds surrounding it, and the troops bivouacked in the neighbourhood. At first it seemed as if the halt was but for a few hours during the heat of the day, and that the march would be resumed in the afternoon; but other troops continued to arrive, and then we were given to understand that there was to be a halt in Seligny for the night. We knew that troops had already crossed the Moselle at Pont-à-Mousson, which is about midway between Metz and Nancy, and the idea of being kept pottering behind was very disagreeable. So we parted company from General von Alvensleben and his staff, and made rapid tracks for Pont-à-Mousson. In an intermediate valley we passed through a large bivouac, chiefly of artillery and medical staff. Then we climbed a long vineclad ascent, and on reaching its summit there lay stretched at our feet the beautiful valley of the Moselle, with the broad stream in its bosom, and the white chateaux on the farther slope, glancing brightly from the rich green ground of the vineyards. On the left the grim old ruin of the Castle of Mousson frowned from the top of its precipitous rock—a gaunt skeleton of ancient war, looking down upon modern war. Under its shelter lay the town of Pont-à-Mousson, developing itself from the distance where we stood chiefly in church spires and barrack roofs, and along the valley directly below us ran the broad chaussée from Metz to

Nancy. We found Pont-à-Mousson crammed with German soldiers. It occupies both sides of the river, connected by the quaint old bridge, which in ancient times was one of the keys by which France was wont to unlock the door that opened up the passage through Lorraine into Germany. Over the river and we were in France proper—no longer in German Lorraine, which every true Frenchman considers but a bastard Frankland. The triangular Place we found packed full of troops of all arms. There runs round it a piazza, such as we may see in Covent Garden, and this piazza was bedded with straw, and formed one vast couch for I cannot tell how many soldiers. Prince Frederick Carl had been in Pont-à-Mousson the night before, but had already gone forward. The Pont-à-Mousson people were very sombre, yet they kept their shops open and did their best to reap a good harvest, accepting German money as if it had been their currency from time immemorial. The first intimation they had that things were not prospering with France had been in the shape of a vast train of hospital-carts laden with wounded, which passed through the town on the 11th. The poor wounded were in a fearful state, many of them were weeping, and all utterly despondent and prostrated. Next day a detachment of about forty Prussian Uhlans had galloped into the valley and begun to tear up the railway between Metz and Nancy, and to cut the telegraph. An official wired their

presence to Metz, and brought a squadron of the Chasseurs d'Afrique on their grey Arab stallions down from Metz at the gallop. They did the distance—about fifteen miles—at hunting pace, surrounded the Uhlans while engrossed at their work, and potted the lot with neatness and dexterity, being on their way back to Metz with their prisoners in less than half an hour. This was a very clever little exploit. Next day the Prussians had come in force and occupied the bridge, encountering no opposition. Since then the stream of arrivals had been constant. The little specimen which we experienced of the malevolence of the French civilians had, it appeared, been by no means isolated. We heard of a patrol, consisting of three men and a sergeant, who had been set upon by the inhabitants of a village on the French side of the Moselle, armed with pitchforks, and headed by the curé. They were all killed. The murderers were taken by another patrol, brought into Pont-à-Mousson, tried by a drumhead court-martial, and were lying under sentence of death. Another case was reported where two dragoons were poisoned in the quarters which they occupied in an outlying village.

Late the same afternoon, the 15th, my companion and myself quitted Pont-à-Mousson, and took the line of advance so well marked by a continuous stream of infantry, cavalry, artillery, and military train. We had been unable to obtain definite information as to the pro-

posed scheme of action. But Frederick Charles himself, that hot-blooded man of war, had hours ago galloped out of the market-place of Pont-à-Mousson; and his was always a good line to follow; for sure as where the carcass is there the vultures are gathered together, so wherever there is the smell of powder burnt in wrath the Red Prince is not far off. When we reached the top of the heights fringing the western side of the valley of the Moselle, we found that the line of advance taken was not by the straight road that leads by Commercy to Bar-le-Duc, at which point the Marne comes nearest to the Moselle, but that it slanted away in a north-westerly direction in the direction, as it seemed, of Verdun, traversing a country consisting of alternate abrupt but inconsiderable elevations and narrow but not very deep valleys. As to the reason for this seeming detour from the straight clutch at the throat of Paris, it became obvious by-and-by. We passed several small villages, around which were great bivouacs; and about nine o'clock in the evening we reached the moderate-sized but very poverty-stricken town of Thiaucourt. It was teeming with troops. Entering a wine-shop close to a bridge at the end of the town nearest Pont-à-Mousson, we made some inquiries of the officers we found there as to the distance which the advance was ahead, and as to what was known of the French movements. They were fresh arrivals, and could tell us nothing except that they be-

lieved we must be close to the limit of the advance, for that the head-quarters of the leading division of the 10th Corps were in the town. As we were both fair walkers and the night was beautiful, and as Thiaucourt did not seem to offer many inducements in the way of accommodation, we determined to cover another five miles to the front, if we could get so far, before seeking the neighbourhood of a friendly camp-fire. So we started merrily up the crowded, narrow, and steep street of Thiaucourt. Not far from the top we came upon a few hand ambulances on which wounded men lay stretched. This indicated fighting no great distance off, for the blood on their bandages was still moist and fresh. Although we heard no firing, we made sure a night attack was in progress somewhere, and, by pressing on, that we should be able to see something of it. Just as we got to the top we passed a group of officers in earnest conversation, several of whom wore the provost-marshal or field-gendarmerie uniform. One of these abruptly and loudly challenged us, and demanded to know who we were. In reply to our explanations he only waxed wroth.

"Correspondents!" roared the angry man, "donner wetter, correspondents indeed! We want no correspondents here. Not a step farther do you go, and if I can do anything you will be sent back at once."

The man was too angry to be remonstrated with.

Something before our rencontre with him had evidently disturbed his equanimity, and we were getting the benefit of his being out of temper. He confiscated our papers remorselessly, and as good as told us to go to the devil —at all events till the morning. Considerably chap-fallen, we were slowly retracing our steps, with the intention of finding quarters somewhere, when we were again abruptly challenged by a still angrier man than the first. I fancy he had been sent after us by challenger No. 1. Anyhow, he did not wait for any explanation. We were coming from the direction of the French, and so—the sentence was concluded by a word of command to a party which was following, and we heard the nasty click of the bayonets as they were fixed and sent home in the socket. Our escort brought us to a large house which was the mairie of the town, and taking us upstairs left us in the dark in a huge room, with a sentry standing over us. It seemed as if our apprehension had excited some interest, for officers often came to the door and peered in upon us through the gloom, but not one brought us tidings of release. Presently there came a trampling of feet on the staircase, officers rushed into the room with lights in advance of some stretchers, on which were wounded men, and we were informed that we were to be removed. We had hoped in our simplicity that we were pretty nearly in as bad case as might be, but we were to find out how rash was this

conclusion. We were hurried across a passage, a door was opened, and we were thrust into a dark room, the floor of which was littered by prostrate Frenchmen. They were all civilians, who had been arrested on suspicion of being spies. The French idiosyncrasy does not develop itself in the direction of free ventilation, and our companions were singularly odoriferous, even for Frenchmen of the lower orders; it may be imagined, therefore, how abominably the place stank. We remonstrated energetically against being herded with spies, but the only indulgence we could obtain was in the shape of two chairs, whereas our companions had to sit on the floor, —at least I judged so, for it was too dark to see them. The room we were in was the Salle de Justice, and the table of the right worshipful mayor, and another one, which, I presume, was used by the Mr. Oke of Thiaucourt, stood on a dais inside a low railing. We took possession of this little platform, got a window open, sat down opposite to each other in our chairs, and simultaneously burst into a roar of laughter at the whimsicality of our position. But laughing, although pleasant exercise for the facial muscles, is not filling, viewed as a supper dish, and we had not eaten since midday. There was no prospect of release, and as little of anything to eat, so the next best thing was to sleep. My companion took the two chairs. I threw my knapsack on the boards as a pillow, pulled the baize covers off the tables, spread

one of them below me, dragged the other over me, and we went to sleep. About midnight we were awakened and brought forth from our den. For my part I wished they had left us alone till morning, for the bitterness of death was past, and I was very comfortable between the mayor's table-covers. We were liberated, told to find quarters for the night if we could—the gendarme grinned a saturnine grin as he told us this—and instructed to call for our papers in the morning, when we should learn what had been determined anent us. At this untoward crisis an ancient Frenchman presented himself, and in reply to our question said he could accommodate us with a bed. I am bound to say that he fulfilled his promise. He did more. He gave us a bottle of vinegar which he called wine. His habitation was a single large room, with three or four mattresses strewed about the floor miscellaneously. On one of them I threw myself, my companion took another, and the old Frenchman set up a melodious snore on a third. In about an hour I awoke. Two cats were on my chest. I was positively overrun with vermin. On occasion I can manage to retain composure under the assaults of the small, lively, and saltatory species of animalculæ, but when it comes to an army of miscreants bearing the conventional name in England of a great ducal family, I am compelled to draw the line; so I got up and strolled out into the bright fresh dawn. Troops had been streaming through Thiau-

court all night, and they still came as if there were no end to them.

Early in the morning our friend the chief of the gendarmes returned us our "legitimations," explaining that they were good only for Stülpnagel's division, not for the whole army of Prince Frederick Charles, and enjoining us strictly to return with all speed to Pont-à-Mousson, adding the cheerful observation that if he came across us again he would have us sent over the frontier under escort. We did indeed return to Pont-à-Mousson but having procured more comprehensive "legitimations" started off with all speed for Gorze.

In Gorze on Tuesday night nobody thought of bed. The hale were hurrying to the front; the doctors, the medical volunteers, and the sisters of mercy were tending the wounded everywhere. Every room was full, straw was shaken down in the streets by the sides of the houses, and wounded laid upon it. A huge convent, like one of those mills you see in Lancashire and Yorkshire, was packed full to its uttermost recess; from every window streamed a blaze of light. The whole town had a weird, lurid aspect. Candles were being burnt on the window-sills to light the troops on to the battle-field and the wounded off it; a babel of tongues raged in its narrow streets; it was impossible to avoid the feeling of nervousness such as one experiences when the air is charged with electricity just before a thunder-storm.

My companion and myself devoted ourselves to tend the wounded in one wing of a large hotel. They lay much as they had been brought in; their wounds had been bandaged in the field, and their time had not yet come for a second visit from the doctor. Three lay stretched on a billiard-table; the blood accumulated in the bed of the table till it began to ooze through the boards and drip on to the floor. Of nine in one small room, to whom we last gave water at midnight, three were dead by five in the morning. We left the poor fellows at six; two sisters of mercy had undertaken them by that time.

A great battle had been fought, perhaps the most stubborn fight of all this bloody campaign. Of 80,000 Germans engaged 18,000 were *hors de combat,* a proportion unequalled in modern European warfare. And it had been scarcely a victory for the German armies; it had been only not a defeat and a contribution toward the victory which it was hoped would follow. Vionville was no battle the plan of which was sedulously devised beforehand; there was no making of skilful dispositions with a keen eye to contingencies. It was simply a furious fight into which regiments, brigades, and divisions precipitated themselves as they came up, sure that they could not do wrong if they could but find an enemy and fasten upon him. Nor was an enemy hard to find or easy to cope with. You will not find a German who fought

at Vionville but will frankly acknowledge that. He owns to you, with a shudder of recollection, how even was the balance for hours, and how his countrymen thought not of turning it in their favour, but would have been glad of the assurance that the beam would not kick the other way. In so far as Vionville was decided at all, it decided the relative staying power of French and German soldiers. There was no question about the fighting, there was not a hair's breadth to choose between them there; but who could fight the longer, that was what Vionville tested. And Vionville, like Waterloo, gave men the belief that the side which did not lose could fight for ever if need were. If further proof were wanting that Bazaine had no comprehension how gravely his situation was compromised, it is to be found in the fact that he could not have scouted the ravine of Gorze or the region to the south of it. If he had done so on the 15th he would have found it swarming with the ever-vigilant cavalry of Rheinbaben's division, which actually on the night of the 15th had indeed as good as turned his front, for it bivouacked at Xonville, some distance on the south-west of Mars la Tour. In utter blindness Bazaine blundered out of Metz in the course of the 15th, and composedly halted for the night when he had got about nine miles on his road. It becomes necessary to give a brief topographical sketch of the locality to aid in the understanding of the events of the next three days. The

terrain to the west of Metz is rolling, broken in places with ravines, studded with forests, interspersed with open fields, numerous villages, and frequent farm-houses. It is intersected by three roads leading westward. Of these the most northerly quits Metz by Woippy, and strikes away by St. Privat la Montagne and St. Marie au Chênes to Brie and the valley of the Meuse. The central and southern roads are one as far as the village of Gravelotte, where the former one goes away in a north-westerly direction to Conflans and Estain. The most southerly of the three goes on due west toward Verdun, threading on it successively the villages of Rezonville, Vionville, and Mars la Tour. This is the most direct road to Verdun, but there is no want of cross-roads to facilitate access thereto by the others, and the way by the central road is little less direct than that by the southern. Before reaching Gravelotte the conjunct chaussée, after coming out of the valley of the Moselle by Longeau and Roserieulles, crosses the table-land surface of a rounded ridge, known as the plateau of St. Hubert, and turning sharp at the Point du Jour, plunges down into an abrupt and narrow ravine with closely-wooded banks, and in whose bed runs the little stream of the Mance. This ravine is prolonged less markedly further north, and may be said to partition off the plateau of St. Hubert from that of Gravelotte. The latter is a model battle-plain of the old pattern, when it was a large army that had a

frontage of a mile and a half. From the brink of the ravine it rolls backward in undulating downs at least as far as Mars-la-Tour, bare of trees or obstructions right and left of the chaussée, which runs along its centre, for a breadth varying from two miles to a mile and a half. It is flanked on the north by scattered patches of forest, on the south by a continuous forest under various names, which clothes the rugged slopes of the ravine of Gorze, and crops up upon the plain, in places encroaching not a little distance on the plateau. Reckoning from Metz, the first forest bears the name of the Bois de Vaux. It clothes the Moselle-ward slopes of the plateau of St. Hubert, and terminates in the ravine of Gravelotte. On the opposite side of this ravine begins the Bois des Ognons, which intrudes on to the plateau to the south and south-west of Gravelotte, and stretches westerly to a little stream that comes down into the ravine of Gorze nearly south of Rezonville. Farther westward on the slope is the Bois de Vionville, and north of it, in the direction of Rezonville, the Bois de St. Arnould. On the plain to the south of the chaussée, between Rezonville and Vionville, is the hamlet of Flavigny; farther west, and also south of the chaussée, are the villages of Tronville and Puxieux. Northward of Vionville, in the triangle between the central and southern chaussées, are the villages of Bruville and St. Marcel. Farther north still, on the central chaussée, is the village of Doncourt.

Bazaine on the 15th had marched by both the central and the southern chaussées. For the night the corps of Le Bœuf, of Ladmirault, and of the Imperial Guards had their camps, the first on the central chaussée about Jarny, the second in Doncourt, and the third in St. Marcel. The corps of Canrobert and of Frossard, taking the southern road, had halted in Rezonville, Vionville, Flavigny, and Tronville, with advanced guards westward as far as Mars-la-Tour.

After all his efforts, as it seems, the French had the heels of Prince Frederick Charles. It appears certain that the German leaders had made their calculations on the basis of a battle to take place on the 17th, and there were indications that such was expected to be joined farther to the westward than the terrain on which the battles of Vionville and Gravelotte were fought. Why, else, had the 19th Division, the first over the Moselle been sent on the 15th so far away due west as Thiaucourt, seeing that, in the actual event, they had to sweep round on the enemy with a circuit surely unnecessarily large? Of the rest of the army nothing had crossed the Moselle on the night of the 15th save the 3rd Army Corps. Had I but been patient, and not mistaken Alvensleben's halt at Seligny for a night bivouac, I should have been in the front of the fray. For at nightfall Stülpnagel had put his division (the 6th) in motion, had crossed the Moselle, and by three in the morning stacked

arms again with his advance guard at Onville on the south of Gorze. Note, that he also was heading due west, as if to march farther in that direction before the time should come for him to swing round on the enemy. Buddenbrock's 5th Division, with the Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin's 6th Cavalry Division, the force destined to open the ball on the 16th, had not crossed the Moselle till the early morning of that day.

The German cavalry never sleep. Probing about the front and flanks of the advance, the horsemen, under cover of the night, had discovered where Bazaine's left flank lay in fancied security about the terrain villages, and the information went to the rear, we may depend, with all the speed that zealous men and stout horses could compass. Alvensleben got the tidings first, and by 5 o'clock Buddenbrock was over the Moselle and hurrying toward Vionville by the Gorze road. Stülpnagel, too, had his bearings given him, and he also was heading now northward. But they were not to draw the first blood. "Boots and saddles" had sounded early that morning in Rheinbaben's cavalry bivouac in Xonville, and his squadrons riding northward had found the French outposts in Mars-la-Tour, and had engaged in a skirmish with them. What he saw there sufficed to convince him that time was precious. He sent word to Alvensleben of the urgency, and taking up his position to block the road while he could, held himself at Alvens-

leben's orders. There were other cavalry men already on the field by 8 o'clock. The Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin had trotted his division forward, and was already driving in the French foreposts from the wooded alleys of the Bois de Vionville when Buddenbrock climbed on to the plateau at nine and saw Flavigny and the enemy before him. But he was yet on the French left, even when he reached Tronville, and his place was on the chaussée to block the French from utilising it. His artillery came into action on the brow of a swell at Tronville, while the infantry got into formation with their faces now looking toward Metz. Then Alvensleben bade them go at the villages, and they went. What sort of fighting had been done before Flavigny and Vionville were carried, was only to be realised by those who saw the vicinity before the corpses were buried. One uses weak words when he writes that the potato gardens of Flanville were strewed with French and German dead. There were places where the corpses were piled one upon another till the earth could not be discerned for the number of her children that cumbered her bosom there in death. But carried at length were the villages, and now for the moment there was the strange spectacle of a single weakened division of Germans standing up alone on the plain against the whole French array. But not for long. The reserve artillery of the 3rd Corps rattled up from the Gorze ravine, and

taking ground on the south-east of Flavigny, began pounding into Rezonville. Then trusty Stülpnagel made his proximity known, as his men, breasting the steep leading up from Gorze into the wood of Vionville, found enemies in there, and essayed to drive them out by the fire of the needle-guns. It was the wood of Spicheren over again. The French in Rezonville had awoke, and sent southward in the Bois a strong body of infantry, who occupied a position both commanding and important; commanding in that it was one of the chief keys to the plateau out of the ravine of Gorze, specially important in so far as that while it was held Buddenbrock was isolated and cut off from all supports, unless by a circuitous route. Stülpnagel had to leave right many a good man on the slope on the narrow forest road and in the scrub before he had tumbled the Frenchmen first out of the wood of Vionville, and then out of the wood of St. Arnould, and was free to place himself with his right flank with its back on the latter, his left touching and aligning with Buddenbrock's right in Flavigny. Stülpnagel had picked up by the way and brought on with him two errant battalions of the 10th Corps, under the command of Colonel Lyncker, which at a later period of the fight made themselves not a little useful.

It was neither a very brilliant position nor a very brilliant prospect. Here stood a single Army Corps, slantingly athwart the plain, its right clinging to the

wood of St. Arnould, its left away in a north-easterly direction, grappled upon Vionville as on a sheet anchor; for was not Vionville the foothold it had achieved on the great Verdun chaussée? Against this left, clung to so limpetlike, and against the whole attenuated line aslant of the plain, the French projected themselves with excessive fury over and over again. The hours passed, and still there came no assistance. Vionville had been carried before eleven, and now it was past one. It had been found necessary to interpose the cavalry as a buffer between the French and the exhausted infantry men. Rheinbaben, if there were terrible odds before him, saw also before him the sight so dear to a cavalry soldier, a noble stretch of charging ground. He was not slow to make the most of it. Again and again his horsemen dashed themselves against the French masses. Once they galloped so far that men said afterwards they had got to sabring the mitrailleuse gunners that plied their work on the chaussée before Rezonville. It was the sight of the war to have seen those cavalry charges on the day of Vionville—work of which this I now write of was but a mere episode, gallant and useful as it was. Necessity has no law, but the general must be in sore case indeed who is forced to dash cavalry again and again into the faces of serried files of infantry men handling a weapon like the chassepot. Who shall wonder that when the drafts were sent for to fill up the gaps in Rheinbaben's

squadrons, a thrill ran through the *landleute* of the districts whence it is recruited, when the footing up of the requisition came to be known. But minutes were precious, and the devoted horsemen threw their lives away to gain them.

The most sustained and furious French attack that had yet been made, had been withstood with growing difficulty shortly before two o'clock, when Alvensleben became cognisant of a new and fearfully ominous complication. There were symptoms that he was about to be outflanked on his left. Hitherto he had been fighting only the corps of Canrobert and Frossard. But now came intelligence that the Imperial Guards were stirring in their bivouac in St. Marcel, and that the corps of Le Bœuf and Ladmirault were already on the heights of Druville, having marched southward from their encampments on the central chaussée about Jarny and Doncourt. Had they come thundering down on his left Alvensleben must have felt that all was over. The greater danger had to be met at the risk of the less. Hard as the struggle had been to maintain the continuity of the original line, it was necessary now to attenuate it still more. Buddenbrock was ordered to take ground farther to the north, and whereas till now his left flank had been on Vionville, it was now to hold his left flank, while with his right he did what he might to stay the avalanche threatening from the northward. It was well for him that at this

pinch supports, fresh if scanty, came to his hand. The mass of the leading division of the 10th Corps, the 19th (Schwarzkoppen), marching from Thiaucourt in the early morning, had its direction given it on St. Hilaire, far away to the west of Mars-la-Tour. But one brigade of it, the 37th (Leymann), diminished to four battalions by the abstraction of Lyncker's two battalions which Stülpnagel had already whipped up as he came to the battlefield, had fortunately a less circuitous route chalked out for it. Its point was Chambley, to act in support of Rheinbaben, and it came very opportunely to Buddenbrock's hand in the emergency in which he now found himself. Into the forest north of Vionville he had already plunged the 24th Regiment, and now he was able to strengthen this slender force with Leymann's battalions. The forest fighting was desperate and long, but the Germans managed to hold their ground till more assistance came in the shape, first of the reserve artillery of the 10th Corps which went into action at once, followed about four o'clock by the bulk of Schwarzkoffen's division. Soon after came hurrying up the 20th Division (Kraatz-Koschlau) which had followed the 19th from Pont-à-Mousson to Thiaucourt, but instead of making the circuit by St. Hilaire had struck straight from Thiaucourt to the battlefield by Chambley. These reinforcements enabled head to be made against the attacks from the north, and baulked for the time Le Bœuf's flanking movement.

Kraatz-Koschlau could even spare some three battalions to strengthen Stülpnagel, who was staunchly holding his own on the right flank.

But to follow the incidents of the northern attack I have somewhat anticipated the events about what was now the German centre, the vicinity of the great southern chaussée. Of its weakness in infantry the French took ready advantage. An old Roman road runs nearly parallel to the chaussée some distance northward of it, and utilising it the French had got into position near it about midway between St. Marcel and Vionville, a large force of artillery. These batteries were doubly hurtful. They enfiladed the struggling infantrymen in the wood to the west, trying to stay the progress of Le Bœuf, and they fired southwards upon the German batteries by Vionville, which were embarrassed in replying to them because of the urgency of the requirement for their firing eastward toward Rezonville to keep in check the French infantry which was threatening the German centre. Becoming audacious in discernment of the double advantage of their position, the French got up more guns to the southward of those near the Roman road, till at length there was a convex formation of batteries stretching down on to the grassy swell on the north-west of Rezonville. By what agency soever, it behoved Alvensleben to interfere with the ruinous practice these were making on his centre, and at least to check their progress, for in very

truth, backed and flanked by infantry, they were echeloning an advance right into his centre, making as if to cut him in two. He had no infantry wherewith to arrest this movement, so ominous of evil: his artillery was overmatched. There was nothing for it but to save his continuity at the cost of his cavalry. While the horsemen were sacrificing themselves, supports might come up to strengthen the centre; at all events time would be gained, and time in such a strait was everything. His Nolan galloped to Bredow, the commander of the 12th Cavalry Brigade, and bade that officer to charge the batteries in his front. Our own Light Brigade accepted not more cheerfully a kindred task than did Bredow's dashing horsemen. Surely it is beseeming to name the regiments to whom fell this forlorn hope of cavalry service. They were the 7th Cuirassiers, the 16th Uhlans, the 13th Dragoons. Up the gentle slope galloped gaily on Bredow's devoted kinder, the French batteries belching death into their faces, the French infantry, from the intervals between the guns and the batteries, pouring into them a hail-storm of chassepot bullets. Full many were the graves that had to be dug on that grassy slope afterwards; but the brigade, what of it was left, was among the guns and sabring the artillerymen before the latter, standing up to their work to the last, had time to seek safety in flight. Aye, and they were not content with carrying the battery, but, riding through them, went

straight at the infantry beyond. On a house in Le Bourget, when retaken by the Guards, there was noticed the inscription,—"Prussians, you shall never see your wives more." The legend might have been borne on the banners of those French columns against which Bredow's brigade was dauntlessly charging. "Nobly they rode and well," but the bullet-storm in their teeth was too strong for them. They had to turn their backs upon it and ride back whence they had come, such of them as had stood up against it. It was the smaller half of the brigade that formed line again in the old position by Vionville.

This sacrifice, however, gave at least a temporary check to the pressure on Alvensleben's centre; but still a fresh access of danger had developed itself on his left. Pressed by the French Guards from St. Marcel, the soldiers of Kraatz-Koschlau, Schwarzkoffen, and Lyncker, who were prolonging the German left flank to the northward of Buddenbrock, had to turn their faces eastward, and fight as best they might against the repeated attacks made from that point of the compass. Meanwhile Le Bœuf, on the slopes of Bruville and extending farther west, was positioned right athwart their extreme left flank, and although he had been checked for a time, was now taking advantage of the engrossment caused to the Germans by the attacks from the east, not only to renew his from the north, but to deploy in a westerly direction, so as practi-

cally to sweep the German rear. To have suffered this evolution would have been destruction. Kraatz-Koschlau and Schwarzkoffen were up to the hilt already: to no man is it given, physically, to face two ways at once, and their faces were already set fast to the east. Cavalry, yet again cavalry, had to be resorted to. Who shall say, after Vionville, that more cavalry than is needed for outpost and despatch duties is a needless adjunct to a modern army? But for its strength in this arm, the night of the 16th of August would have closed upon the German army hurled back defeated into the ravine of Gorze. True, the cavalry was mercilessly used, if indeed abused is not the more appropriate word; but the crucial urgency of the exigency gave cavalry an opportunity to vindicate the perpetuation of its higher attributes as an arm of war in the face of the altered conditions of modern warfare. The general would be a reckless maniac who should teach himself to lean on his cavalry as an every-day and matter-of-course appliance for such purposes as those to which cavalry was put at Vionville; but the knowledge, based on what happened at Vionville, cannot harm him, that if he has a good and strong cavalry force, he has a reserve-buckler on which he may rely in the hour of need to postpone or avert an otherwise inevitable reverse.

Wedell's cavalry brigade from the 10th Corps was sent against Le Bœuf to charge the heights of Bruville, and

ease the pressure on the left flank. It had a foretaste of what was in store for it when, as they passed Mars-la-Tour, the village shot up into lurid flames kindled by the French shells. French shells tore through its ranks as they rode up the open; French shells crashed into it when the inevitable halt and dislocation took place as the broken ground was reached. The brigade was the focus of a converging fire from the north and from the east. The chassepots and the mitrailleuses opened upon it as the horsemen struggled through the rocky underbrush that kept them at a walking pace, and made a mockery of formation. Can an infantry regiment, in full marching order, swim out to an iron-clad in the offing and carry her by boarding? The task is hardly less impossible than was that which the Wedells failed to accomplish. They came back "aus bruchstücken" (in fragments), to quote the graphic words of an actor, and retrieved their formation behind the reserve artillery of the 10th Corps, which had come into action a little to the east of Mars-la-Tour. Flushed by the repulse of the cavalry, Le Bœuf's infantry assumed the offensive with greater audacity. Coming down due south with an extended front on Mars-la-Tour, the infantry stretched as far west as the farm of Greyères, while still farther west, near to Ville-sur-Iron, there rode five regiments of the cavalry of the Imperial Guard, the pick and pride of the French army, in whose long, straight rapiers was vested

the guardianship of its right flank. This advance made untenable the position of Schwarzkoffen's regiments on the German left wing north of the chaussée. Already they had been assailed in front and on the flank; now there were troops actually in their rear marching along their backs. Voights-Rechts sent orders to Schwarzkoffen to extricate himself from a position so impracticable, and the manœuvre had to be effected by the co-operation yet again of cavalry. With Schwarzkoffen's 19th Division had come from Thiaucourt the Dragoon brigade of the Prussian Guards, consisting of the 1st and 2nd Dragoon Guards. They formed close columns of squadrons due north of the burning Mars-la-Tour, their faces northward toward Le Bœuf's infantry. Aligning with them on their left, and facing the cavalry of the French Imperial Guard, was Warby's brigade of the Division Rheinbaben; the 4th Cuirassiers, the 13th Uhlans, and the 19th Dragoons, strengthened by the 10th Hussars from Rheinbaben's other brigade, and by such of Bredow's 13th Hussars as the French shells and chassepot bullets had left fit for another charge. The Guards, whose charging ground was farther west than the broken country which had brought Wedell's brigade to grief, had a good stretch of fair swelling downs before them. Warby could not have wished a happier land whereon to test the question of superiority between German line cavalry and the picked horsemen of the French Imperial

Guard. The Guards rode straight at Le Bœuf : one may be right sure there was no swerve in the gallop that brought Warby's men sword-point to sword-point with the French cavalry. Methodists are fond of propounding it as an axiom that a single charge is all that can be got out of cavalry in one day. Why, here were these troopers of the Prussian Guards dashing themselves again and again on the bayonets of Le Bœuf's masses, now recoiling before the gusts of chassepot firing, now rallying and charging in again as if each man had as many lives as there were pistol cartridges in his pouch, and he was determined to expend the ammunition of vitality. So long as martialism lives in the Fatherland, so long will this deed of *derring-do* on the part of the Prussian Dragoon Guards be cherished as one of the proudest memories of a campaign very fertile in such memories. As for Warby's brigade, it had work to its liking. Men can project from rapier blades no pale death in the shape of chassepot bullets. A cavalry fight is horse to horse, man to man, sword to sword; weight, valour, and skill give their owners something to show for their gifts. Long, confusing, and stubborn was the *mêlée*. One who looked on it from Mars-la-Tour told me that the simile which occurred to him as he watched was chaos in a state of fermentation. The fermenting chaos in time resolved itself into its constituent elements. One constituent element was galloping to the rear, the other was

chasing it furiously; and the process of fermentation had precipitated an abundance of lees, which cumbered the ground whereon the chemical phenomenon had developed itself.

The diversion caused by these efforts of the cavalry enabled Schwarzkoffen to extricate himself from his critical position, and he retired till he had his back on the chaussée between Vionville and Mars-la-Tour, with strong artillery in his rear. Penetration further northward on the part of the German left wing was abandoned for the time, and the defensive strictly adhered to. To conclude the narrative as regards the left wing it may be stated, that soon after six o'clock Le Bœuf and Canrobert's corps, who had been comparatively quiescent since the retrograde movement of the Germans, reassumed the offensive in strong force. After some tough fighting this attack was repulsed, and then Kraatz-Koschlaw and Buddenbrock, keen to utilise their opportunities, followed up the retreating Frenchmen and gained some new ground in the direction of St. Marcel and Bruville.

Stülpnagel's less eventful experiences on the German right must now be briefly alluded to. Owing to the French having chiefly concentrated themselves on the effort to break the centre and turn the left of their opponents, he was not exposed to very fierce assaults, and those which came against him he sturdily repulsed. But toward five o'clock it appeared to have struck Bazaine

that he was permitting too great quietude to the German right. He sent out to the south a large portion of his reserve, consisting of the Infantry of the Guard, who, occupying the Bois des Ognons, came through the Bois de St. Arnould, and made a demonstration against Stülpnagel's right flank, which rested on that wood. But the cannon had not been thundering all day for nothing. Barneckow, with his 8th Division, had been at Frontigny, on the other side of the Moselle, at midday. By five o'clock his leading infantry brigade, and some batteries of his cavalry, were already in action. The latter came to strengthen Stülpnagel. By the orders of Prince Frederick Charles, who had reached the field at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, the Brigade Rex, which was Barneckow's foremost contingent, came up the steep and plunged northward through the woods of Vionville and St. Arnould, with intent to take in flank the French Guard infantry, who were troubling Stülpnagel, and having thrown them back, make a demonstration against Vionville. This manœuvre was supported by the 49th Brigade, from the Hessian Division, under the command of Prince Louis of Hesse, the husband of our Princess Alice. It belonged to the 9th Corps, and had been sent on by General Manstein from Pont-à-Mousson at midday, in accordance with instructions from Prince Frederick Charles. The Hessians struck up from Gorze through the Bois des Chevaux into the Bois des Ognons, co-operating on the

right with the Brigade Rex. Neither brigade was able to do much in the dense woods, now still further obscured by the growing darkness. The Brigade Rex did succeed in clearing the wood of St. Arnould, but could effect no demonstration in the open against Rezonville; the Hessians did not succeed in driving the French out of the Bois des Ognons on the right. While they were fagging and fighting in the twilight, a furious French cannonade broke out on the north, directed against the German right wing, under cover of which it was apparent that the French were falling back over St. Marcel and Druville, as was conjectured, to place themselves on the central chaussée, in final abandonment of the design of cutting their way through the obstacle on the southern. So far as was consistent with prudence, Rheinbaben's ever-handy cavalry strove to hamper their movement, and succeeded in cutting off some French prisoners in Rezonville. By nine o'clock the bloody battle-field was no longer vexed by shot or shell. The fighting men bivouacked in the tracks in which they had fought; the Krankenträger and ambulance people saw before them a task so stupendous that they might well stand aghast. It was with the wounded of Vionville that Gorze was ghastly on the night of the 16th of August.

I have said that there was no sleep for anyone in Gorze on the night of the 16th of August. All who were not otherwise engaged were busy among the wounded. But

while the wounded groaned the leaders and the staff had to work, organise, direct; for the victory was not won yet by a great way. There was little access for outsiders to the busy bureau of Prince Frederick Charles; yet I got a glimpse of it through circumstances beyond my own control. While I was striving to soothe into an approximation of coherency the landlady of the hotel, who alternated between hysterics and vituperation of her species generally, a couple of field-policemen took it into their honest heads to regard me as a suspicious person, and forthwith conducted me to the bureau. While justifying myself, a process which was not so difficult as it had been the night before, I saw six orderly dragoons dispatched in as many minutes in as many different directions. There was no staff officer with leisure or inclination to enlighten a vagrant as to the dispositions in progress, but this much I gathered that there was urgent hurry for the bringing forward of every available man. What I learned then must be supplemented by later information.

It seemed a foregone conclusion among the Germans that they were in no case to resume hostilities on the 17th; nor did there seem much apprehension that the French could take the initiative. By the morning of the 17th there was every appearance that they had given up all hope of opening up the southern road, and had indeed drawn back materially from the posi-

tion on the central road which they had held on the morning of the 16th. It was not, however, blocked to them save by detachments of German cavalry which patrolled it as far as Estain. The German forepost line established after the fight of the day before, extended from Ville-sur-Iron, north-west of Mars-la-Tour, in a slanting south-easterly direction across the plateau till it struck the head of the Bois de St. Arnould due south of Rezonville. The chain crossed the southern chaussée between Vionville and Rezonville, a circumstance showing how little ground the Germans had gained since the previous morning. All through the night and during the early part of the 17th, the several Army Corps were marching up and falling into the places arranged for them in the council of war, and in the bureau over-night. There was wonderfully little fuss and no confusion. Spicheren and Vionville had been battles of occasion, joined without premeditation or indeed expectation, and fought out as best they might, in what manner and with what material was most available in the exigency. The battle of the morrow was to be of another sort—one of the old formal set battles, in which generals were to play with divisions and Army Corps as with chessmen, were to elaborate combinations, to strike preconcerted blows, to put forth their genius, science, experience, and skill to gain the result they wished for. Not that the campaign had not earlier been fertile in evidences of the possession of

these attributes by the men who directed the steps of the German armies. A master-mind shone in every detail of the plan, of which the battles of Spicheren and Vionville, occurring when they did, were incidental excrescences, springing out of the pressure of a modification in the circumstances.

Bazaine, crippled as he was by the action of the 16th, could not, even supposing him tardily awakened to the danger of his position, have made an attempt at extricating himself on the 17th. Drawn back into a commanding position, with his right wing on Roncourt and above the precipitous ravines of St. Privat-la-Montagne, his centre on Amanvilliers, La Folie, and Leipsic, and his right on a natural fortress, the plateau of St. Hubert, with Moscow on the right of it, and Point du Jour on the left, and inclining backward over the ridge to the left rear at Rozerieulles and Jussy, he held a position of surpassing strength in itself, and wherein he was not actually debarred from getting on to the central road by Verneville and Doncourt, while with his right he kept open the northern road, emerging as it did from his position at St. Privat. Had he elected he might have marched by it on the 18th, and had a fair start of the Germans, whose nearest point before they moved on that morning was several miles south of the northern chaussée; but had he been ever so nimble he would have run a fearful risk of being taken in flank, and in the best event would

inevitably have had his foes thundering on his rear by nightfall. Let those who blame him confine their strictures to his unaccountable sluggishness before the 16th. Let those who in cold blood urge that, *coûte qui coûte*, he should have cut his way through the Germans on that day, remember that in trying to do so he had exhausted all his available reserves, except a portion of Ladmirault's Corps. It was not in the nature of things that he could have moved before midnight of the 17th, and by that time the track he must have taken was scoured by German patrols quick to send back the tidings of his movement to the plateau of Vionville and Mars-la-Tour, by that time packed with German Army Corps which had not suffered as had he the day before. No, Bazaine was fairly out-generalled and out-manœuvred, and he accepted the inevitable, greatly as it was his own fault, with conduct and skill that to my thinking go some way toward redeeming his earlier mistakes. I have used the word inevitable, but there was one chance open to him, although a hazardous one, if he had been a man of prompt action. The Thionville road leading into the valley of the Meuse at Longuion was yet free from Prince Frederick Charles's éclaireurs. By leaving one of his corps d'armée in position about Amanvilliers and St. Privat with orders to hold its ground as long as possible, and make a demonstration as if with intent to use the northern road by Brie, falling back under the guns of Plappeville when it

could keep up the delusion no longer, he would probably have gained a day's start before the Germans would have found out that his whole army was not still standing before them. But the risks of such an attempt are apparent when it is noticed that Prince Frederick Charles, had he been beguiled into spending the whole of the 18th fighting with a single French army corps, would on the 19th have still by the Brie road have been equidistant from Longuion with Bazaine on his more circuitous route, supposing that the latter had made all possible use of his start. If we consider that Bazaine, not so much by his own fault as by the rottenness of the French system, or rather want of system, of obtaining intelligence, had no conception of the strength opposed to him, but on the contrary believed that on the 16th he had fought all the German troops that were available for the 18th, an additional reason is found for the line of action on which he determined, nor is there any occasion to inquire into the truth of the allegation that he felt himself not justified in quitting Metz in its then condition of imperfect defence. Abuse him for what we may, we cannot deny him the selection of a fine position on which to stand the impact of an attack in force. Its natural strength was worth to him at least an additional Army Corps. And he had strengthened the fortress with judicious outworks in the shape of strongly-held and carefully-fortified posts at St. Marie-aux-Chênes, Vernéville, Gravelotte, and in the

Bois des Vaux. His whole front was studded with rifle-pits.*

Von Moltke and Prince Frederick Charles had imperfect knowledge of the dispositions just detailed. They could not assure themselves whether Bazaine had elected to stand and fight upon his ridges, or whether he would not rather dash out upon the northern road, offering battle as he came. It was necessary, therefore, to make dispositions to meet both contingencies; and since the latter contingency was the likelier, and, if it occurred, demanded the prompter dealing with, it behoved the German leaders to commence the game with special reference to that eventuality. The southern road was first of all to be securely blocked. That task was assigned to the 7th and 8th Corps of the 1st Army, the former lying in the western portion of the Bois de Vaux

* I observe it has been asserted that the French in those earlier battles did not resort to rifle-pits. Anybody asserting this who was in sight of the operations must have been stone-blind. I have been in dozens of them. The story of 800 and odd corpses having been found in one after the battle of the 14th of August must have been a "goak" perpetrated by some youngster on the staff eager to feed Germany with sensationalism. There were two varieties of what the Germans call schützen-graben. Of one the churchyard at Point du Jour is a good example—a triangle surrounded with a low wall, which had been loop-holed, and with a trench inside for additional cover. The other pattern consisted of a small half-moon excavation—the convexity toward the enemy—the earth from the hole breasted up in front, over which the marksmen fired in a kneeling position. The maximum garrison of one of these rifle-pits must have been about twelve men, half of them firing while the other half rested behind the shelter. To have packed throngs of men into large rifle-pits would simply have been to provide so many charnel-houses. Doubtless numbers of the little half-moons are still to the fore on the battle-fields. It is easy to tell the French works from the German by the objective of their convexity. The Germans, however, converted many of them.

and the eastern portion of the Bois des Ognons, standing in fine due south from Gravelotte; the latter, touching the left of the 7th Corps, occupied the western part of the Bois des Ognons, the Bois de St. Arnould, and the Bois de Vionville. It stood south of Rezonville. Besides caring for the southern road, and occupying a useful position in view of a necessity on the part of the enemy for falling back on Metz, these two corps served as a kind of stationary anchor for the 2nd Army to sway from, or perhaps it would be a better illustration were I to liken them to the fixed pivot on which it was to swing round should events justify the movement. The 2nd Army had its front in a north-easterly direction, parallel with the line of the northern road, which was its first objective point, having relation to the contingency that Bazaine would attempt to march off thereby. This front was composed of, reckoning from right to left, first, the 9th Army Corps, which touched von Göben's left, and with the direction given it on Caulre farm; second, the Guards, direction Doncourt; third, the 12th Army Corps (Royal Saxons), direction Jarny. The second line was composed of the troops that had been so severely mauled on the 16th, viz., the 3rd and 10th Corps. The 4th Corps was on its way toward Toul; the 2nd Corps was not up, having only quitted Pont-à-Mousson early on the morning of the battle.

King Wilhelm had been on the field on the forenoon

of the 17th, and before returning to Pont-à-Mousson, he had issued his formal orders for the morrow. Wellington himself could not have been more laconic or less devout. "The 2nd Army," so wrote Moltke in his master's name, "will, early in the morning, at 5 o'clock, commence operations and advance in échelon between Ville-sur-Iron and Rezonville. The 8th Army Corps will co-operate in this movement with the 2nd Army on its right. The 7th Army Corps will at first have the duty of covering the movement of the 2nd Army against any demonstrations on the part of the enemy from the side of Metz. The King's further orders will depend on the action taken by the enemy. Communications for his Majesty will next find him on the height south of Flavigny." Prince Frederick Charles, quitting Gorze, quartered himself for the night between the 17th and 18th in Buxières. He was stirring early. What a subject for a painter that morning gathering of the leaders of army corps by the poplar-trees between Vionville and Mars-la-Tour, with the Red Prince in their midst, brusque, curt, and emphatic! Around the group, conning over a new slaughter, lay the ghastly evidences of a past. Mild-eyed, handsome-faced Prince of Saxony; puffy, phlegmatic, *gros* August of Würtemburg; Alvensleben the aristocrat, with his thin clear-cut features and bright hawk eye; Voights-Rhetz, with the shrewd, keen look of a lowland Scot; Manstein, grim, grey, and deter-

mined; Göben, of the massive head and thoughtful brow; these stand, in a roughly defined circle, with their horses' heads turned inward; and there addresses them in a few short crisp sentences, the tall square man on the powerful bay; he lets his hand drop on his thigh with an audible thud, for he is very heavy-handed in every sense, this stalwart man with the massive hair-clad jaw, the strong wide mouth, cruel in its set resoluteness when the features are at rest, the well-opened piercing eye under the splendid forehead, which, broad, square, and knotted above the eyebrows, soars inexplicably away into calm benevolence. A man this, in the tight red tunic, cast surely by nature in her special mould for a great military leader. You might think with yourself, as you looked at him, that you could not fancy him as a friend; look again, and I dare swear you will fancy him far less as an enemy. Nor is the Red Prince without friends, warm and jealous; if the women in the French villages use his name as the Scotch peasants of old did the name of the Black Douglas, to hush their babes wherewithal into awe-stricken silence, his army would die for him to the last man, and I have seen a pretty picture of bonny children climbing in loving trustfulness about the knees of the heavy-browed and heavy-handed man. He does not detain his generals long under the poplar-trees. One of them afterwards gave me his laconic parting words, "Your duty is to march forward, find the enemy, pre-

vent his escape, and fight him wherever you find him." And Alvensleben the pious added in his quiet tones, "In the name of God," as the generals wheeled their horses outwards, and the little council scattered.

Modern battle-fields are not like cockpits. Were that a real battle which is ordinarily fought on Easter Monday on the Brighton Downs, the spectators, who squat and lunch placidly on the Red-hill, would find that commanding elevation very hot quarters. Generals, with the perversity of human nature, do not make the convenience of spectators the primary consideration in their dispositions, nor has any means yet been discovered to enable the spectators to circumvent the inattention to their convenience on the part of the military authorities, by being in more than one place at the same time. The science of expeditious and comprehensive war intelligence is still in its infancy. If the millennium does not intervene through the zealous efforts of the Peace Society, we may anticipate gigantic strides in this department of catering for the avidity of the public, culminating perhaps in opposition-balloons with a war correspondent in each hanging in the air over the centre of the battle-field, and having a "special wire," per favour of Mr. Scudamore, leading direct into each Foreign Editor's room. But such appliances are for posterity. In the late war, especially towards its commencement, the civilian spectator who was not fortunate enough to be

attached to a head-quarter staff (and there were only three, I believe, to whom this well-deserved favour was accorded) had to be thankful for very small mercies indeed. I thought myself extremely lucky in not being interfered with when I took up what seemed an eligible position at the edge of the wood of St. Arnould, to the south of Rezonville. The forest land here throws itself up into a little elevation, affording some command of the rolling plateau to the north-eastward, with Gravelotte on its bosom, the ridge of St. Hubert and Point du Jour beyond, and away to the north on the horizon the bushy uplands of Vernéville, with the church spire showing above the trees; yet here, as it was not difficult to discern even at the time, and far more easy afterwards from sad *indiciæ*, it was possible to witness only one phase of the battle, and that neither the most critical nor the most decisive. I propose to narrate first the occurrences of which I was the eye-witness here on the southern edge of the field, and, having done so, to give then a short account of the more northern operations, from the official documents and other information I received afterwards from the Saxons and Guards, to whose share fell so much of the heavy fighting on the German left and left centre.

By half-past ten o'clock the 9th Corps was no longer visible on the plateau about Vionville. It had gone off on its northern march, and its place was occupied by the 3rd Corps, which swarmed all over the gentle swells and

depressions. On the breast of the higher ground south of Flavigny there was a stationary group with led horses and mounted escort behind, the dead of the 16th flecking the ground all around. Orderlies and aides-de-camp galloped furiously from all points to this stationary group—galloped furiously from it north, east, and south. For here was the King; and here was von Moltke, with all the ends of that seemingly-tangled skein gathered inside that marvellous brain of his, behind the downcast inscrutable eyes. The 8th Corps, on the fringe of which I stood, was showing itself out of the wood, and feeling its way with no great decision apparently on to Rezonville, whence ran the straight chaussée eastward into Gravelotte, the southern outwork of the French front. There was little or no firing. Now and then came a shell from the French batteries about Gravelotte, tentatively as it seemed, to experiment as to the range, but the rare reports only served to accentuate the lurid lull before the breaking of the storm. The clouds presently clashed together, and the thunder rattled out, coming down clear and booming on the wind from the bosky coverts and the church spire of Vernéville. Nothing was to be seen save the bursting of an occasional shell on the slope, but the bickering volleys of musketry, giving the treble to the deep bass of the artillery, told in language that could not be misinterpreted how a hot and close fight must be going on out of our sight to the north. It was

about half-past eleven when the air first began to throb with this din. Now it became apparent why the 8th Corps had been cropping out on the plateau toward Rezonville. By mid-day the heads of the columns of Weltzien's division (the 15th) were pushing on north-easterly towards Malmaison and the Bois de Genivaux, to take up the alignment with the fighting further north. Barneckow's division (the 16th), on the right of the 15th, was pushing across the plain toward Gravelotte, in dense broad columns, already half-deployed into line. Now we in the south became familiar with artillery fire through another sense than that of hearing. The German batteries went to action from Bagnieux southward to the edge of the Bois des Ognons, pouring their fire into Malmaison, the wood of Genivaux, and the village of Gravelotte. Nor were the French slow to reply. It seemed as if the wood were one huge crater, which incessantly vomited projectiles that tore through the air and burst in the German ranks, strewing the plain with fallen men who were left behind unheeded as the columns pressed ever on. Gravelotte, too, was girt about with its zone of cannon and mitrailleuses, plied with assiduous industry by gunners who must have known what of advantage to the cause of France rested in their successful maintenance of the advanced position. The cannonade for long was a drawn struggle, neither side gaining much material advantage. But the slaughter of it was terrible, and the

Germans out in the open must have lost the most heavily. How or when Gravelotte was at length taken I could not tell. There was a gradual collapse in the French artillery fire, a ragged deployment of their infantrymen in front of the village, a rush of Barneckow's men at the double, and a hellish mêlée of fighting that seemed as if it would last for ever. On the deadly furnace of battle the Germans perpetually piled fresh fuel. The Bois des Ognons emptied itself on to the plain into a fearful plunging fire from the French batteries on the heights of Point du Jour. The regiments struggled on through it to precipitate themselves on Gravelotte; yet so fearful was the shell-storm that beat on the plain to the south of Gravelotte, between it and the woods, that the Germans had to swerve out from under it somewhat, making a circuit so as to fall upon the village from the west instead of the south. These were von Zastrow's soldiers of the 7th Corps. The Barneckows—whether it was they or the former who carried the village I know not—had slanted away further to the north-east toward the Bois de Genivaux, roughly aligning on its right with Weltzien's division. The French made a desperate stand in the wood, while by this time their batteries at the Point du Jour were firing furiously into Gravelotte—indication that it was no longer in French hands. I was told afterwards that the hither edge of the Bois des Genivaux was carried by von Göben's soldiers at the

point of the bayonet, and that they had to push the French out of the wood by sheer bodily weight. Thus much was not apparent from my position, although I had improved it by coming up nearer the front; but there was no difficulty in discerning that the fighting was desperate and protracted. All the while the din was to be heard from the north out of the range of vision, but it seemed as if it were now further back, whence the hope became common that the Germans were faring somewhat better in the north than fortune suffered them to do in the south.

Yet in the south there were gleams presaging a victory to achieve which much had yet to be done. Von Göben had seemingly gained the wood, gaining thereby no respite from the persistent firing of the batteries at St. Hubert and Point du Jour. Von Zastrow, with intent as it appeared to give his friends of the 8th Corps some relief from this, had clothed the neighbourhood of Gravelotte, as soon as it was in German hands, with four batteries from Kamecke's Division, but the reply to them was so strenuous that it seemed surprising how they were able to keep their ground, while the continuous explosion of shells in and about the Bois des Genivaux gave evidence that the 8th were still in purgatory. As it seemed in bitter chafing at their sufferings, ever and anon fierce attempts were made to crush the causes of them. Dimly and vaguely only could the movements be discerned from

where I stood, but large detachments must have burst out of the wood, and pushing down into the dip where was the bed of the Mance, breasted the opposite slope, and debouched against Moscow and St. Hubert. Through the glass I could see the broken battalions as they clambered piecemeal out of the hollow, and tumbling together into approximate formation strove to push on up the gentler slope. Then there came heavier smoke banks on their right flank above the batteries at Point du Jour; the batteries of mitrailleuses at St. Hubert raged like wild cats right in their faces; the French infantry men, in position between St. Hubert and Moscow, fringed their ranks with spurting white smoke from their chassepots. It seemed as if, while a portion of the German attack fell back, the other moiety had lain down to get some cover and to bide the spending of the storm. True they had lain down, those soldiers who did not retreat; but it was not for them more to rear themselves into dressed ranks. It was for them to lie deeper yet, when the time should come, under the sod on which they were now prostrate. Effort after effort met with a similar fate, and at length the bootless and costly efforts were suspended. Von Zastrow had strengthened his artillery by Gravelotte, till, as I afterwards learned, he had fifty-four guns in position there, under whose pounding the French fire at Point du Jour somewhat slackened, giving at length some relief to the 8th Corps in the wood

to the northward. Zastrow boldly pushed infantry forward in support of his artillery, which to say the truth seemed to have rather incautiously worked themselves out to the front, so as to be in danger should the French essay a rapid and energetic push from Point du Jour across the ravine. Not content with this, it was clear that he had determined on beginning the offensive on his own account. This act of Zastrow's is the war incident of Gravelotte which has been most canvassed and controverted. It unquestionably resulted in disaster. As unquestionably it was done in the face of his positive orders to hold his own, and act as the stationary pivot for the corps to north of him. And it is certain, too, that Zastrow acted on his own responsibility in what he did, and in virtue of a certain far from narrow discretion which the German military policy allows to officers of any rank when placed in a position of self-reliance. Zastrow, it appears, had little to guide him as to the state of matters in the north. The wind had shifted as some say, and blew away from him the sound of the cannonade by Amanvilliers, Montigny, and Champenoise. As others have it, there was an actual lull in the firing soon after three o'clock, about the positions named. It is urged in favour of Zastrow that this inaudibility of the northern cannonade, from whatever cause, gave him some right to conclude that the French centre and right had been thrown back, and that the strenuous defence on the left

was all that was between them and complete defeat. If these his premises had been sound, there is no doubt that Zastrow's conclusion, and the action he based upon it, were eminently creditable to his generalship. Had the French right and centre really been pushed back while the left maintained its ground, it is plain that Bazaine would have proceeded at once to strengthen the latter with the troops driven back on the former, since he could afford to disregard the progress of the German left and centre, sure ultimately to be brought up all standing on the great rear-buttress before which the French fought—the fortress of Metz. This in fact was what Bazaine did some hours afterwards when the Saxons had turned his right and the Guards had smashed his centre. Zastrow, arguing accordingly, as it seems, judged that it would be good strategy to anticipate any such strengthening for the French left by attacking it at once, and forcing it to participate in the retrograde movement to which he had concluded the centre and right were abandoned. Nay more; a decisive move on his part on the extreme French left might let him get through to their rear communications, and once in possession of the throat of the great chaussée about Jussy, he blocked the chief line of French retreat, while the 8th Corps, relieved from terrible torment by St. Hubert and the Point du Jour, might debouch from the wood on to the plateau, and take its position in the final crushing of the French front.

How Von Zastrow reasoned I do not know; but he acted as if he had reasoned in the groove I have indicated. A sanguine man, he had not counted the cost of success, even if he should gain it; he had not, indeed, sufficiently studied the question whether success at all were possible. He shot his bolt, a self-reliant and over-confident archer, and he failed even to get the distance of the target. It was close on four o'clock when the offensive movement became perceptible. From beside Gravelotte one brigade (the 25th, of Glümer's corps) streamed down into the ravine inclining south-easterly, and the slackened French fire at Point du Jour kindling up upon them as they moved. Kamecke's division, which was already astride of the ravine where it penetrates the Bois de Vaux, contributed the 28th brigade, which could be seen pressing up to debouch on to the plateau of St. Hubert, where the skirting wood ceases nearly due south of Point du Jour. The French seemed to catch at the significance of the movement instantaneously as it was begun: their infantry, rushing to the left through the poplar trees on the chaussée, formed across the southern plateau, so as to flank as well as front the Germans when they should come staggering up on to this new battle-field. More batteries were dashed hurriedly into position and got into fire. Those previously there swung their trails round to the north somewhat, and their muzzles thus looked the way the German

brigades were toiling upwards. High up as were the French, the depth of the ravine afforded the Germans miserably little cover from their fire. For the French gunners could almost see into its bed; and although the inverse rise could not be reached by a direct fire, they yet let fall upon it a plunging fire which, from the steepness of the slope, was much more destructive than plunging fires for the most part are. The loss must have been terrible in those ranks while they were struggling on to the debouchment. At length the edge of the wood and the lip of the ravine was gained. You could see groups and isolated men straggling out into the open and falling into formation in that momentary confusion which always attends such a reorganisation. Just then cannon, mitrailleuse, infantry fire, as if by signal, burst into one fell combination of outpour. Had the formation been an inanimate structure, it must have been battered down by sheer weight of metal; how much less then could it stand, made as it was of sentient men! There were efforts to make head against it nevertheless; detached rushes of rash men who were not to be convinced of the impossible till overtaken by arguments which crushed conviction in, while they crushed motion and life out. It was piteous to watch the efforts. I have seen sheep swept away in a spate swirling down a Highland glen—watched their struggles as they caught foothold on a scaur, where the rushing water shallowed,

to get out of the vortex on to the firm land on the bank that seemed so absurdly close; how the water kelpie seized them again as they strove, whipped them remorselessly off their legs, and sent them down stream again battling impotently, as they span in the eddies, or were hurried down the rapids. The sight recurred to my recollection as I watched those soldiers struggling grimly for foothold on the edge of that deadly plateau. They would not give it up. Ever as one attempt was beaten back and crushed down, there were men pushing staunchly on to make another. It seemed such a little way, such a very little way, up to the poplar trees there and to victory; surely, with the goal so nigh, it was not to be thought of that it should be pronounced inaccessible. A thief might as well have tried to steal the Koh-i-Noor from its case in the Exhibition, as these men have persisted in their struggles to get to those poplar trees through the storm of iron and lead, the serried ranks, the densely lined rifle-pits, which were its protecting show-case. "*Mörderisch*" was how one that had looked into the eye of the fire till it beat him down, described that fire to me the same night—a quiet, unemotional, blood-depleted Feldwebel, who had been brought into Rezonville that the *Stabsarzt* might judge whether it was worth while tinkering at a man who had six bullet-holes in him. Von Zastrow's heart must have bled as he watched his Kinder going down by sections.

I know not whether an order came that the brigades should give up the useless persistence in courting annihilation, or whether they drew back in realisation of the insanity of such persistence. They did abandon it, and shrunk back off the plateau, lying down on the inverse bank of the ravine, screened from the enemy's direct fire, but exposed to the plunging fire, and raked by French infantry detachments that had pushed forward to the brink of the ravine, further northward, opposite St. Hubert. The batteries whose duty it was to support the two infantry brigades had to seek the plateau by the only route practicable for wheels—the chaussée crossing the ravine by deep cuttings and steep fall and rise. They got down, as it appeared, into the ravine. We saw them wheel off into the road and clatter down the Gravelotte slope at a trot. Behind them, at a swinging canter to overtake the guns, dashed a noble regiment of Uhlans. How gallantly the horsemen rode on their way to death! Artillery and cavalry disappeared into the ravine. Was it bottomless, then, that they never came out? The French infantry fire spurted out of the rifle-pits on the further brink; several batteries of mitrailleuses, in regularly constructed emplacements, took to grinding sedulously their cursed output; the cannon further back on the Point du Jour made practice over the heads of the mitrailleuse men and the sharpshooters, down into the bosom of the

gorge. The German artillerymen did, as it appeared, get into action, with the muzzles of their pieces sticking up into the air, but guns were dismounted, and the gun detachments had to be reinforced over and over again, from the reserves in the rear by Gravelotte. As for the Uhlans, the morrow furnished a chart of their doings—a chart on which the courses were traced in by dead men and horses. They had striven to charge up the inverse slope of the chaussée on to the plateau of St. Hubert, and they had failed. Men and horses, not many,—it must have been a mad forlorn hope of reckless men,—lay on the roadway in the gutters, just on the brink of the plateau; there were none further, but very many all the way behind. If ever horsemen were wantonly butchered by being sent where it was staringly impossible they could have been of service unless their horses had been winged, those Uhlans were. I believe that, after losing nearly half their number, they were got down the narrow bed of the Mance, somewhere behind the position where the two infantry brigades were lying. They might as well have been in the moon.

Except an effort to cover with infantry-fire in some measure the batteries in the ravine, by the sending forward a couple of battalions of the infantry brigade that had been kept in reserve, an interim paralysis was forced upon the 1st Army. The firing still continued, both artillery and musketry, quickening now without apparent

cause, now falling away for a little into a dropping fire; but of offensive movements on either side there were none. The game had seemingly ended in a stale-mate. Von Zastrow had little or nothing in hand, for, as it appeared, he had sent a brigade away on a fanciful excursion through the Bois de Vaux with a wide circuit to come in from the south upon Jussy and outflank the extreme French left; a rash project, which, the direct attack having failed, whose success must surely have been assumed in devising the flank march, ought to have resulted in the annihilation of the detached brigade, if the French had been as enterprising as they were stubborn. Von Göben was jammed in the Bois des Genivaux so long as the French fire from Moscow, St. Hubert, and the Point du Jour could sweep him off the onward path. The 1st Army was clubbed. Von Zastrow's intended *coup de grâce* was arrested; in his haste not to be too late he had raised his arm too soon, and had spent himself prematurely.

The Germans invaded France with armies whose numbers it is easy enough to utter glibly off the tongue, but whose magnitude it is very difficult adequately to realise. How many Britons have ever seen 30,000 armed men in a mass? We go to an Easter Monday review, and see some 26,000 men march past a saluting point, and come home in the notion that we have been looking at an uncommonly large body of

troops. Let our Easter Monday Volunteer Army stand as an equivalent to a German army corps. The former takes about an hour and a half to defile past the commander. The Germans had fourteen of the latter in France to make war wherewithal, besides Landwehr divisions, a Würtemburger contingent, and fortress artillerymen, equal, on a moderate estimate, to two army corps more. At our Brighton pace a whole day, just twenty-four hours, would be consumed in the marching past of this half-million of men. There are obvious advantages in war-making when your numbers are so large that you do not require to stand particular about the absence or presence of an odd army corps or two, when you can comfortably leave one as a force of observation, dispatch another on a distinct measure of precaution, and reckon with tolerable confidence on yet a third dropping in to help you finish off your work with the greater thoroughness. This was the happy condition of the Germans at Gravelotte. If you care to join in the French cry, "Over-matched by two to one!" the Germans grimly meet you with the rejoinder, "Why be over-matched then? or, if you cannot help yourselves, why fly in the face of all experience of war, and roar 'À Berlin!' at the head of your scantier levies?" War is not a game like a school-boy boxing-match, where the spirit of fair play insists that there shall be some approximation to an even match between the two combat-

ants. And even the school-green instinct of fair play does not stand in the way of allowing the stronger boy to put forth his whole strength when the weaker boy denies his weakness and is the challenger. The opportunely arriving German army corps on the 18th of August was the 2nd, whom Fransecki had marched without a halt from Pont-à-Mousson to Buxières on the southern rear of Mars-la-Tour. There, as it seems, the Pomeranians had cooked and eaten, and, as giants refreshed, had come on to Rezonville, eager to have a share in the day's amusement. Thence the King sent them into Gravelotte, to help Zastrow to a solution of the problem in which he had got mystified. It was a strange, grand sight to watch these fresh and splendid soldiers marching on in a stream that seemed endless. Nobody knew, within such ken as we had, whence the wonderful windfall had come. Some swore it was the 5th Corps from the Crown Prince of Prussia's army, that there was General von Kirschbach himself on the grey horse, and that the Crown Prince was in colloquy with his father at Rezonville. Others had it that it was the 4th Corps which had thus turned up promiscuously. But be it what it might, sure it was it did not dally by the way. The leading regiments formed in front of Gravelotte, others went north-easterly, so as to touch von Göben's flank in the Bois des Genivaux. By this time it was seven o'clock, and the setting sun going down in blood,—blood in the sky as on earth,

—cast his ruddy rays slantingly on the lurid smoke-banks that overhung the battle-field, and battled with the yet redder-forked tongues of fire which were bursting out of the burning farm-buildings of Malmaison, where the wounded Frenchmen were being roasted alive in miserable helplessness. There was a general advance. The Zastrows straightened themselves up in their layer in the ravine, and once more essayed to get a grip of the ground on its brink. Fransecki's leading brigade took the chaussée and the easier dells of the ravine towards the Bois des Genivaux. The 8th Corps pressed the branches aside and sprang out of the wood into the open, heading for Moscow. Behind, all along the rear of the grand movement in which some 60,000 men were concerned, the artillery of the three corps shelled incessantly the French positions. The scene in the deepening twilight was inexpressibly splendid—with a splendour, however, that was baleful, and made the flesh creep and the blood turn. Right gallantly did the French stand up against the huge living wave. Their army was fighting not for the feeblest chance of victory: hardly any conceivable freak of the captious goddess could have given it that. But it was fighting for something yet more critical than victory,—for its very life; for if the Point du Jour were carried by the Germans, then von Zastrow's aspirations would have tardily yet surely been accomplished. The beaten centre and right would have

had their line of retreat invaded; the defeat would have become a chaotic slaughter till the broken and bewildered battalions, barred from the chief line of retreat, had huddled somehow close under the guns of Plappeville and St. Quentin. The men who stood at Point du Jour, St. Hubert, and Moscow had it in their keeping to avert this terrible fate—to break the fall, all too dislocating already, of their brethren of the centre and right. Nobly they did their devoir. In numbers they could have been but slender as compared with their assailants; but they had a position, the merits of which were worth many men, and they were worthy of the position. The night fell, and still the bright streaks of flame shot westward from the batteries at the Point du Jour, evidence that French guns and gunners still stood there. Gradually the tongues of flames ceased to shoot forth, gradually a hush, such a contrast to the din of the day that it was almost painful, came over the bloody field. The dogs of war were satiated; they had lapped blood till they might lap no more. And still the Frenchmen stood by the Point du Jour, keeping at bay the foe while their friends defiled into safety behind the screen thus sturdily maintained for them. The 1st Army had fought well and squandered life recklessly; but spite of the late reinforcements it had to submit to the failure of its capital enterprise. The foreposts all but touched each other through the watches of the night. Those of the

Germans were made specially strong, for the day's work had taught the watch-setters respect for those men on the crown of the height above them. And what of them? One knew nothing till the morning broke, and then it was found that the shattered churchyard-wall, and the smashed and half-burnt wayside houses, the rifle-pits and the battery emplacements were silent, save for the groaning of the wounded left behind, and empty, save of those and of the dead who lay beside them. The French, having held the position so long as it was of use, had abandoned it, and by six o'clock Fransecki's forepost men, creeping cautiously forward to the crown of the ridge, saw before them the brown scarp of Fort St. Quentin, with the beaten French host clinging round its base.

The wearied and powder-grimed Germans threw themselves down on the field, and slept among the dead who littered it. Bivouac fires were sparse, the men were too spent with hard fighting to care for food or warmth. They were lighted to their slumbers by ghastly chamber candlesticks; by the pillar of fire that yet towered heavenward from the burning Malmaison, and by another fire that showed over the horizon by Verneville. In the darkness between nine and ten, there burst out the din of a furious cannonade to the north, and the tired soldiers who had piled their arms were made to resume them. But soon this in its turn died away, and the battle-field was left in peace.

Having now recounted what I personally saw of the battle of Gravelotte, I proceed to give a brief narrative of the occurrences which were not within the scope of my observation. The position of the several corps of the 2nd Army has already been detailed. By seven the three corps forming the 1st line were already on their north-easterly march in gigantic echelon of army corps. Their advance in this line was directed, as I have stated, to meet the expected contingency that Bazaine would attempt the northernmost of the three westerly routes toward Verdun. The German leaders had as yet no information warranting them in concluding definitely that this design had been abandoned, although indications pointed in that direction. These indications became so marked towards ten o'clock that Prince Frederick Charles judged it wise at least to arrest the march designed to meet a contingency, the occurrence of which was improbable; he therefore halted the Saxons, the flanking corps on the left, at Jarny, and the Guards at Doncourt; the 9th Corps had some time previously reached Caulre, and were halted there, cooking their breakfasts. It was not long before the Prince obtained additional assurance that the French were contemplating no advance move, but had elected to give him battle on ground of their own choosing on the plateau of Amanvilliers, and, as it appears, the King in his southerly position was early in possession of intelligence which led him to form the same.

conclusion. It would appear, however, that neither von Moltke nor Prince Frederick Charles had any idea that the French right was prolonged so far to the northward as it was; but on the contrary had the idea that their right flank rested on the village of Amanvilliers. It was in the light of this impression that the Saxons got the order to march on Batilly, where they would be close to Bazaine's path if he should tardily move off by the Brie road, while in the absence of any such endeavour, their course was thought open to make an easterly sweep, and take in flank the supposed French right in Amanvilliers, while an attack was being made on that position in front.

The latter attack was entrusted to the 9th Corps, supported by the Guards. Manstein marched his men off from Caulre about half-past ten, and headed direct on la Folie by Verneville. It was at the latter place where he experienced the first resistance from the French holding it as an outpost position, and as soon as he showed his columns beyond it, began the furious cannonade, which to us in the south had been the token that the battle was begun in earnest. He had to fight his way hard after passing Verneville. To get at the French position he had to march through the interval between the Bois de la Cusse and the north end of the Bois des Genivaux. The end of this gap toward Metz is closed in by Amanvilliers and Montigny-la-Grange; and here the French were posted in great strength, and indeed took the offensive against Manstein as he strove to deploy. He

was not strong enough to make much impression on the position. Part of his artillery he got forward nearly as far as the farm of Champenoise, which was terribly mauled by his shell-fire, and with a part of Wrangel's division he occupied the edge of the Bois de la Cusse fronting toward Amanvilliers, supporting the infantry by several batteries. The Guards, in the meantime, had in part received another direction, the result of Prince Frederick Charles' appreciation of the fact that the French right extended further than he had at first reckoned upon. Von Pape marched his first division over Jouaville to Habonville, on the north of the Bois de la Cusse, while Budritski, whose first orders were to march his division (the 1st) on Verneville to support Manstein, had his course presently altered also upon Habonville. St. Privat was found strongly held by the French, and as it would have made a gap in the German line had the Guards gone so far north as to attack it, recourse was had to artillery practice to drive the French out of it. From a position between St. Ail and Habonville, Prince Hohenlohe, the General commanding the Guard artillery, converged on St. Privat the steady fire of no fewer than fourteen batteries of artillery, or, in other words, of 84 guns. Under the personal orders of Prince Frederick Charles, who visited that part of the scene of action between one and two, this pitiless fire was persevered in for more than an hour, as a means of marking time till the Saxons should come up on the

left; and Prince Hohenlohe was able gradually to improve the positions of his batteries directed against St. Privat. But although the Saxons, pressing on from Jarny, were true to time, it was found that there was other work for them still further on the left. The French were in force also in St. Marie-au-Chênes, and before the Saxons could co-operate with Prince August against St. Privat, it was necessary to sweep this obstacle out of their path, and also to ascertain exactly how far this French right, ever seemingly elongating itself further and further, really did extend. Prince George of Saxony with the 24th Division, supported by a brigade from von Pape's left, fell upon St. Marie, while Montbe, with the 24th Saxon Division, swept round by Auboué and found that at length he was on the right of the French flank, and had at last got their weather-gauge. It was half-past three already when the Saxons (23rd Division) had carried St. Marie, and were ready with the 24th, looking now straight at Roncourt, to co-operate with the Guards in an attack on the formidable position of St. Privat. Meanwhile Manstein with his 9th Corps was not prospering. He had got a grip of the gap with Amanvilliers in its throat, and of the two woods flanking that gap; but farther he might not come. Amanvilliers was a position of great natural strength, and the French had accumulated about it a force of artillery which fairly coped even with the strong artillery that Manstein had brought into opposition. Fifteen of his guns were dismounted

or otherwise rendered unserviceable by the French fire.

It was with difficulty that his infantry, by the Chantrenne Farm and the north-east corner of the Bois des Genivaux, could maintain themselves against the repeated and furious attacks of the French from la Folie, raked as they were also by mitrailleuse and artillery fire from Amanvilliers. On his right, the Hessians in the Bois de la Cusse were lacerated by a persistent infantry and mitrailleuse fire from the hamlet of Jerusalem, while the French artillery at St. Privat, firing over Jerusalem, showered shells upon the wood; and, in short, so far from being able to pursue the offensive, he had quite his work to hold his own. But the advantage of practically unlimited reserves told in his favour. The 3rd Army Corps had been marched on Verneville, and halted there. Its artillery was available to support Manstein, and it was used in this way, as also was a portion of its cavalry. Then the Guards and the Saxons were perfecting their dispositions for storming St. Privat, and that would relieve his pressure from the left. Already before five the Guards were distracting the attention of the French holders of Jerusalem. The Garde Schützen Regiment had spread itself through the sparsely wooded Bois, and were scrambling forward through the underbrush. Soon the whole of the 4th Brigade of the Guards was marching on St. Privat from Habonville, and it was speedily followed by the bulk of

von Pape's division from St. Privat. The Guards got near St. Privat, but they could not get into it. It was held by the French with inveterate stubbornness, and the natural strength of the position backed their defensive efforts. Prince August of Würtemberg had to hold his hand, and betake himself to artillery fire till assured of the co-operation of the Saxons, who were marching southward from Roncourt. The 10th Corps, too, was summoned close up in reserve, and, indeed, a part of Kraatz-Koschlau's division actually took part in the storm. At half-past six the Guards, standing waiting on the south and west, heard the music of the Saxon guns from the north, and then the von Papes got the word to show of what metal were the Prussian Guards. They stormed furiously into the place; as furiously came Montbe's Saxons in from the north. The double attack carried St. Privat; but after the Germans were in it, the French refused to go out, and had to be turned out, fighting desperately every step of the way, and causing terrible loss to their assailants before the operation was accomplished. Thus the French had their right flank turned, and were forced from the strong position on which it had rested. They were rolled backward into the woods of Jaumont and Saulny, but not utterly broken or completely disheartened. For it seems unquestionable that Bazaine was able to march toward the maintenance of his left-wing position at Point du Jour not only a portion of the Imperial Guards

who constituted his reserve, and of whom he had made some, but hardly a sufficient, use during the day, but also some of the troops who were engaged at St. Privat, and who were moved under cover of the forced attack made on Manstein's position from Amanvilliers, just at nightfall.

How was it faring with Manstein while Prince August was relieving him of one embarrassment by carrying St. Privat? He, too, had made an offensive attempt on Amanvilliers simultaneously with von Pape's push at St. Privat, sending forward a brigade of the Hessians and a part of Wrangel's Division in combination with a detachment of the Guards detailed from the right of that corps, the whole supported by the artillery of the 3rd Corps. But even now Manstein could not get at the heart of the French centre in Amanvilliers, Montigny, La Grange, nor could his artillery get the dominance over that of the French. Alvensleben with his 3rd Corps was close up, and prepared to back up the labouring 9th Corps with the whole of Buddenbrock's Division. But Buddenbrock's men were not to be used just then in an offensive movement, for as they were coming the French took the initiative in great force, and hurled large masses of infantry on the Bois des Genivaux. It is a moot point whether the Imperial Guard participated in this attack in any strength. Next day, behind la Folie, I saw several dead Guardsmen, and after the capitulation of Metz an officer of the corps told me that a whole brigade

of the Guards had been in action about Amanvilliers late in the day. If this was the case, it must have suffered little in proportion to the line regiments engaged, for the crop of corpses in Guard uniforms was comparatively very scanty. This late effort on the part of the French, made in twilight that had deepened into darkness before it was finally quelled, could scarcely have had any other object than to mask the retirement of the beaten right wing. It answered its purpose then not inefficiently, and there seems no ground for concluding that the Germans succeeded at all that night in carrying the position of Amanvilliers any more than the southerly one at Point du Jour. But it must have been tenable only on sufferance and by the favour of the darkness, and like Point du Jour it was abandoned in the early morning. The Saxon cavalry, with dashing enterprise, penetrated the northern forests the night of the battle and cut the railway and telegraphic communications between Metz and Thionville. By the following night the ring of Germans around Metz was well defined.

The battle of Gravelotte was both positively and relatively less bloody than that of Vionville. With more than double the number of troops engaged on the former day as compared with the latter, the Germans lost about 14,000 men; the French probably about the same number. What force Bazaine had in the field is difficult to estimate. When he surrendered, his strength, 173,000 men, was as surprising as it was inexplicable on the

estimates to which the Germans had access. It seems impossible that he could have had fewer than 150,000 men at his disposal on the 18th of August; and it seems equally impossible that a man in possession of his senses, even without a scintilla of military capacity, should not on such an occasion have mustered out to the last man.

About noon on the 19th, I crossed over the ravine of Gravelotte, where in the gutters of the chaussée the blood of the Uhlans stood in red puddles, and pushed on past the ruins of the Auberge of St. Hubert and up to Point du Jour. The burying parties had hardly begun their work, the wounded were still lying on the slopes in great numbers. From the sharp angle formed by the chaussée, where it turns sharp to the south above St. Hubert, I went forward on the old Roman road over the flat. The Germans had not lost a minute. Already they were reversing the front of what the day before had been French battery emplacements and rifle pits. The replis lay behind entrenchments shaded by boughs of trees which the French had cut. And the French looked so strangely near—seemingly just over the way. They were encamped in peace on the slopes and the summit of Mont St. Quentin, the white *tentes d'abris* clustering round the fortress, and the smiling villages on the slopes. The scene was like a gigantic pic-nic or a gipsy camp, with the French tents beyond, and the Germans lolling in their bowers. There was no formal truce, but the peace was unbroken. Fort St. Quentin might have

shelled the plateau where lay the Germans—in the morning, indeed, it had sent two shells into a group of mounted men standing before the detached house at the sharp turn of the road; but it seemed as if this had been merely a kind of formal protest against any supposition that it was not solely of its own will and pleasure that the fortress was quiet. The assertiveness was too emphatic to have been agreeable to the two dragoons killed by one of the shells; but the Germans were quite content to concede what they could not well have challenged, all the more readily because St. Quentin rested satisfied with the somewhat grim formality.

For a day or two immediately after Gravelotte there was a good deal of confusion as regarded several matters in the army which lay on the battle-field where so many gallant soldiers were yet without graves. The commissariat arrangements were hardly equal to the strain put upon them, while the great dearth of water, and the badness of quality in what was to be found, combined with the already ripe taint of putrefaction, the heat of the weather, and the revulsion from the excitement of the battle, to stimulate disease among the soldiers. Men who had to trust to the field-post for the transmission of letters, had their tempers sorely tried. On the 19th I consigned a letter to a fussy but civil functionary who was in charge of a field-post wagon a little way in front of Rezonville, and who professed his expectancy to start "*gleich*," which experience had taught me was a very elastic word. I

found the field-post wagon was still stationary the following morning, the civil and fussy gentleman cooking at a bivouac fire a diabolical mess, consisting of fat bacon, onions, biscuits, minced something or other (it might have been postage stamps), coffee-grounds, and rice, while his horses placidly slept the sleep of the just as they stood ready harnessed for the start, even as they had done on the previous night. Again the courteous official professed his belief that he was to start *gleich*, although he owned that he had not the remotest idea what was his destination. In reply to my proposal to take my letter away and give it to some other less indefinite field-post, he professed his readiness to give it up, but advised me not to make bad worse. The ultimate result was that the letter miscarried altogether, and it was the case that letters which did arrive took longer time in reaching England from Gravelotte and the vicinity about this period, than they did from before Paris at a later period of the war.

On the morning of the 20th August I revisited the flat in front of the hamlet of St. Hubert, on which were stationed the German outposts, behind the entrenchments which they had been steadily working upon, and from which, the day before, the French army was visible, lying on the face of Mont St. Quentin, and around the villages of Scy, Lessy, and Lorry. To my surprise the French had totally disappeared. On the Friday the ground was white with their tents, around

which swarmed the brisk gentlemen in the red trousers. Now, on the Saturday, not a tent or a pair of red trousers was visible. The surly fortification on the top of Mont St. Quentin frowned across in its solitude, the church-spire of Lorry smiled in the sunbeam that slanted across it, but the traces of a great army had as completely disappeared as if the ground had opened and swallowed up the host. I followed the concavity of the German semicircular entrenchments round to the left through the corner of the wood of Chatel, which extends under various names, but in one continuity, as far as Saulny, which is nearly due north from Metz. The Germans held the wood, and were entrenching its verge. Thus, within my own observation, a German belt extended thus early around Metz, from the Moselle at Moulins, in a sweep first to the west and then to the north, till it reaches within a mile and a half of the Thionville road. The troops which lined this belt consisted chiefly of Prince Frederick Charles's army. The completion of the ring was taken up by the army of General von Steinmetz. His district, so to speak, began at the Thionville road, and swept round the eastern semicircle of environment to the Moselle below Metz. Of course a space of such a magnitude as is here indicated could not in so short a time be invested with that closeness which would have been the case had the siege been simply that of a fortified town and citadel. But the investment was close enough for this,—that the army which was inside could

not hope to get outside without fighting a pitched battle. Such a force as that of the French lying in and around Metz was not like the garrison of a detached fort, capable of an effort at cutting its way out by a sudden sortie. It must, as it seemed, break the cordon in form, and with warning sufficient to admit of a German concentration to oppose the endeavour.

In view of the long and weary inaction which the soldiers of the 1st and 2nd Armies endured while summer waned into autumn, and autumn had all but chilled into winter, it may not be uninteresting if I quote the *ipsissima verba* of a passage which I find in the notes which I made on this 20th of August, as calculated to show how, even thus early, circumstances rendered it possible to forecast the policy of the German leaders.

"Hitherto the German army has taken the *rôle* of aggression, and the French army has stood solely on the defensive. On the part of the Germans the aggressive tactics hitherto have been at once politic and characteristic in a national sense. It was necessary as a feature of the German programme that the French army of Metz should be got "into chancery," and that there should be some desperate and decisive fighting, in which might be demonstrated the impossibility of resistance to the fury and persistency of the German assaults. Both these ends have been accomplished. The army of Metz is beleaguered under its walls, the armies of Steinmetz and

Prince Frederick Charles grimly standing sentry over it. The steep of Gorze, the plains of Vionville, of Rezonville, and of Gravelotte, the ravine beyond it, and the plateau of St. Hubert, strewn as they are with German dead, but left, nevertheless, in the rear of the unrelenting advance of the German host, bear bloody but unquestionable testimony to the fury and obstinacy of their attack. Thus the double purpose is attained. Now, therefore, the German tactics undergo an alteration. The children of the Fatherland will no longer spill their blood in attacks which would be purposeless, and therefore wanton; they await in their turn the assaults of the beleaguered French army. Sooner or later that assault must come. Want of supplies must precipitate the assumption of the offensive on the part of the French. But if they can manage to live till Christmas on the traditional French wealth of resources in the way of edible matter, it will not accord with German policy to attack them. So long as they are surrounded as they are now, they are harmless; if they would break the environment, and become again dangerous, they must fight for the freedom. The German leaders will not court the affray. Why should they, since their great object is the maintenance of the blockade? But since this is their object, it may well be imagined how they will resist any attempts to raise that blockade." It afterwards fell to my lot to be an eye-witness of the manner in which at least one of those attempts was resisted.

And was this investment of Metz, then, with its result, to all appearance, postponed indefinitely and uncertain, to be the end of all the German forced marching after Spicheren; of the rapid push across Lorraine; of the double battle above Gorze; of the German dead whose corpses are fertilising the plains of Vionville and Gravelotte; of the thousands of wounded who cumbered the towns and the villages all the way in the rear to Cologne and Mannheim? No. While there was another French army still in the field it was not for the Germans to linger about the scenes of their victories, and take to Lord Russell's policy of "Rest and be thankful." Prince Frederick Charles and General Steinmetz were reckoned, together, capable of sitting on the brink of the French well at Metz, and looking down on the French army in its depths. The Crown Prince, his army rested and refreshed in la belle Nancy, was already pushing westward, giving the contemptuous go-by to the obdurate little Toul. Already we heard rumours that his cavalry scouts were swarming in the valley of the Marne. About St. Marie, Amanvilliers, the blood-stained St. Privat and the battered Jerusalem, the picked soldiers of Germany—the army corps of the Guards, the Royal Saxons with their lissome dash, and the slower-pulsed Saxon Province men of the 4th Corps, were making haste to bury their dead, and were girding up their lines, to form a new—a 4th—army under the command of the Crown Prince of Saxony, and march westward and northward along the

river from which the army took the name under which it made itself famous.

In a day or two the hotels of Pont-à-Mousson were to lose the custom of the princes and counts who were on the royal staff, for the King was to strike southward *viâ* Commercy, and joining his son at Ligny, accompany the 3rd Army in what seemed then was to be the straight, if not the bloodless road to Paris. What had occurred before Metz was but the first act of the tragedy, what should occur thenceforth in its vicinity was in this Titanic drama only "secondary business;" the piece was to be played on and out nearer and yet nearer to the torn heart of France.

But enough of what then was the future. On Saturday the 20th I traversed the whole of the battle-fields of Tuesday and Thursday, and the outward and visible signs of slaughter more and more convinced me that the fight of the former day had been unquestionably the fiercer and the more hotly contested. Let me attempt to give some idea of what may be termed the area of slaughter in the two days' fight. Within a space of about six miles in length by four in depth there was not a space so large as Piccadilly Circus that did not bear some token that one or more men had fallen upon it. Now the tokens were dead bodies, sometimes straggling so that several yards intervened, sometimes so close that you could hardly step without treading on the dead; again they consisted of

bloody coats, pieces of linen, helmets, cuirasses with the tell-tale holes in them, knapsacks riddled by bullets, dead horses all but blown into fragments by the bursting of shells. The lines of demarcation between the German and the French dead were in places drawn with almost mathematical accuracy. On one of the roads leading up the steep slope out of Gorze I came on an outlying part of the table-land where the Germans lay very thickly. It looked as if they had advanced in a column along the road, for its margin was quite bordered with the dead. Here it was where the column had come up which an American of genius and fancy likened to a great anaconda, pushing forward with long tortuous folds till a battery opened on its hinder parts and amputated and all but destroyed its tail. Then I came to the place where the column had struggled into deployment and had got within the fatal 200 yards' distance of the Frenchmen. The latter lay far thicker then than the Germans had lain in the first space. Burial parties were at work at this place, but seemed bewildered to decide where to make a beginning. I advised one of the officers to double-trench the ground all over, laying the dead along the hollow of each successive trench, something like a celery bed; so many were they that this market-gardening style of grave would have been, I am convinced, the best plan for getting them out of sight; saving transport to isolated grave-pits, and lessening the temptation to bury too near to the surface, which is always strong with burial parties who

have excavated with labour a large pit, into which they are anxious to crowd all the corpses in the neighbourhood, regardless of the fact that the uppermost are so near the surface that the plough of the next spring must uncover their remains. The surface of the little churchyard of Gravelotte had been raised three feet all over in one day. The church had been crowded with the most severely wounded in the Thursday's battle, and as the poor fellows died they had been carried out into the churchyard. This with its loopholed wall had been the scene of a desperate stand on the part of the French, and already had more than its own share of corpses; so that, when I had seen it on the Friday, the bodies, chiefly of Frenchmen, were lying two deep all over its edge. The interior of the church was a sight I never can forget. Most know the ornamental character of these Catholic churches on the Continent, the meretriciously decorated altar, with the pictures, the candles, and what not. The white altar-cloth was splashed with blood, the floor was bedded all over with the wounded, and the atmosphere had become tainted and malaria-laden. In the churchyard I had noticed the little wooden memorials over the village dead, with the wreaths of immortelles around them, sticking up through the stacks of dead. To-day they were out of sight, covered with the earth that had been thrown over all as the easiest and quickest method of a wholesale interment.

I have referred to the "fatal 200 yards" of the

Germans. Always the attacking force, as they had hitherto been, their fire was confessedly, and in the nature of things, wilder than that of a body waiting in a stationary position for them to come; and it was ever at the long-range distances that the French did so great execution among them with the chassepot. As to the question of the comparative accuracy of the zund-nadel-gewehr and the chassepot as weapons of precision at long range, the Germans did not as yet appear inclined to express an opinion, yet one might gather even thus early what a terrible respect they had already learned for the weapon which they afterwards confessed to be "pale death" itself. But when they got within the 200 yards, and brought their needle-guns down to the point-blank range, then it was that their fire was of the "fatal" character I allude to. French prisoners with whom I spoke told with a shudder of the shower of bullets from the needle-gun at and within this range, that fell upon a column about the breasts and faces of the men, and against which nothing could stand. It is only on such vantage grounds as the top of the Spicheren or the edge of the ravine above the Gravelotte ravine that the French stood up for any time against this fire of the Germans.

Before quitting the position before Metz, on Monday, the 22nd August, I took a final walk along the foreposts on the Gravelotte side. The entrenchments of the Germans were now nearly complete, and although rough and ready, were very artistic in their formation. Sentries

were stationed on the brink of the valley lying between Mont St. Quentin and the Chatel plateau, with strong piquets lying concealed in their rear. From their position I could see with the glass into the mouths of the heavy cannon of Fort St. Quentin, which looked strangely close. Going along a little to the right, in the direction of the Moselle, I was able to turn, so far as eyesight was concerned, the shoulder of Mont St. Quentin, and lo! stretched out before me lay the beautiful plain of Metz, with the river gleaming in the sunshine, the spires and roofs of the town sparkling brightly, and the gloomy mass of Fort Bellecroix—the finest work of Cormontaigne—grimly covering the right. The German cordon, I was assured by a staff officer, was now completely drawn round Metz, and Thionville was also invested. There was every appearance that the armies of Prince Frederick Charles and Steinmetz had quietly settled themselves down in their position. Crimean men have been wont to assert that the French were the best constructors of huts in the world, but I question whether the Germans do not excel them. All along these tablelands they had built themselves dainty little leafy habitations out of the branches and bark of the poplar trees that line the roads, and seemed as comfortable as if they were at home in their cottages in the Fatherland. As I passed one of the regiments its band, standing in a circle, was practising one of Mendelssohn's masterpieces, the men enjoying the strains *sub tegmine fagi*, while all

around the burying parties were engaged in burying not only their own but their enemy's dead out of their sight.

On returning to Pont-à-Mousson, from my first start to Thiaucourt, I had determined to walk no longer, but at once to invest in a horse, if one was to be procured in the town. This at first seemed doubtful, for the Germans had made a very exhaustive levy, but ultimately I chanced on a horse-dealer whose stud had not quite been swept away. He was one of the most marvellously stolid men I have ever seen, half German, half French; the blended blood seemed wholly to have stagnated in his veins. Almost the only sign of animation he evinced was a wink, but then that wink was remarkably expressive. I was fortunate. He had an admirable horse in his stable, sure-footed, fast, easily kept, and in fact a compendium of equine virtues. But—bother the buts, they always crop up in such cases—this paragon of animals had one little drawback, he was stone-blind. Now there sometimes are advantages connected with a blind horse—that is, if he is a reasonable animal otherwise. He trusts his rider and will go straightforward courageously, till the rein gives a hint to turn to the right or the left. There is no fear of his shying, because to him there are no objects of alarm. He commonly has good action and a light mouth. In view of all this I directed the blind horse to be saddled and brought forth. I mounted and set him a-going.

It is cruel to be hard on the misfortunes of a fellow-

creature, but this horse must have had a mental organisation as opaque as the pupils of his eyeballs. Three steps in any one direction were enough for him, then he tried another, and so continued this process, totally insensible to any suggestions on the part of his rider. He ran his nose against a house, and then he all but fell over a plough; finally, in one of his tacks, he broke the glass of a general's carriage, and brought down a "Donner wetter" or two upon my head. Tired as I was of walking, I became fully impressed with the fact that it would be cheaper to walk ten miles than to ride the blind horse one, even if such a feat were possible, and, dismounting, I led him back somewhat ignobly to the stable. The horse-dealer winked solemnly, bestowed a caress on the abominable brute, and expressed his astonishment that I should not have found him all that could be desired. The excuse was, that he had always been driven alongside of another beast, and the deprivation of his companion had demoralised him. But I was bidden be of good cheer, the horse-dealer was still assured that he would be able to accommodate me. After a little delay another steed was brought forth. He was "long and low"—the true Leicestershire desiderata. The length was principally in the neck, which resembled that of an ostrich; the lowness was in the back, which curved downward so that his withers and rump stood up like two sharply-pronounced hills. His colour was a dirty-white; he had capped hocks, a pair of most villanous

recently-broken knees, and a wicked backward cast in his eye that said very little for his temper. His appearance was certainly not in his favour, but remembering the adage never to trust to appearances, and being assured he was a remarkable performer, I mounted and got him under way. He went decently enough to the end of the street; but when a battery of artillery came along the cross street at a trot he soon gave me a sample of his remarkable performances. He declined to go forward at any price, but instead he was open to kicking as freely as the heart of man could desire. He kicked the battery into the direst confusion, wriggling about here, there, and everywhere, continually elevating that prominent rump of his, and struggling furiously to get his head down. I thought I should have had to choose a favourable moment and dismount, leaving him and the battery to settle it between themselves, but at length I got his head homewards, and then he suddenly subsided, and walked to his stable as if he had done something to be proud of.

The horse-dealer winked again as I returned a second time, and said he had still another beast. The past experience was not of a character to tempt further experiments, but I wanted a horse badly, and I knew this was my last chance; so I told them to bring him out. He was a very conscientious-looking quadruped, slightly monumental as to his legs, but then he had a bold Roman nose, and a tail possessed of what may be styled the

Grecian bend of horsetails. My heart warmed to him at once, for, like myself, he was an old dragoon. He had been cast from a French cavalry regiment in some remote age, and had since been engaged, judging by the collar marks, as a beast of burden. Well, I started with this animal for a third trial, and to do him justice, his conduct did not belie his conscientious aspect. He plodded forward steadily at a kind of compound of a walk, a trot, and a canter; he seemed to be walking with his fore legs, trotting with one of his hind legs, and cantering with the other. The effect was novel, if not wholly agreeable, and then he really got over the ground very fairly. On the day of Gravelotte he carried me uncommonly well, his ancient military training making him stand fire like an adjutant's horse, which is generally too depressed in spirits to manifest emotion at anything short of an earthquake. I began to get very sweet on him, although the scarcity of keep was a considerable inconvenience. There was but little bother with him on the Thursday night. When I joined the bivouac I fastened him to the end of a row of cuirassier horses that were picketed close by, and the men gave him of their oats and hay. But they went away next morning, the bivouac broke up, and fresh quarters had to be sought. In one of the houses of the deserted village of Gravelotte I found a room which was tenanted only by two sorely wounded men and an hospital attendant. All the other houses were packed full of wounded, and one

was in luck in getting the use of a chair, and of the common frying-pan in which to cook a piece of bacon bought from a marketender. But there was no room for the horse, and if there had been, he would not have been the best company for the wounded men. I tied him up outside while I ate, wrote, and slept, and then late in the afternoon it struck me that he must be thirsty. I rode the brute a circuit of some five miles in search of water, and when I got back it was all but dark. On entering the room I found one of the wounded men lying dead, and the other removed along with the hospital man. It was not pleasant to occupy the same room with the poor dead fellow, and luckily an empty stable turned up next door with plenty of hay in the loft. Having fed the horse copiously, I adjourned among the hay to sleep, and in the morning I found my noble steed was gone! Perhaps he had broken the fastening, and walked away of his own accord; perhaps a passing suttler had stolen him. Anyhow he was clear away, leaving me as a memento the saddle and bridle. These, which were of the nature of a white elephant, I was glad to get rid of for a box of cigars, and fortunately my comrade turned up from Pont-à-Mousson with a carriage horse, and driver that by some inscrutable means he had discovered there unrequisitioned.

CHAPTER IV.

SEDAN : BEFORE AND AFTER.

HAVING made up our minds to quit the beleaguerment of Metz and strike off in a southerly direction with intent to hit on the march of the Crown Prince's army, we started off rather vaguely on the 22nd of August, and reached St. Mihiel, a small town on the Meuse, the same night.

Now it seems hardly to be realised how difficult it was in the times of which I am writing to get reliable information, or to guard against being led away by some baseless rumour. I remember we lost the whole of the 23rd by slanting away to the north-west as far as a village called Fresnes, by reason of a circumstantial, but untrue story, to the effect that a battle was imminent under the walls of Verdun. When we quitted St. Mihiel for Bar-le-Duc on the morning of the 24th we could get no certain information whether it was as yet safe to go to Bar-le-Duc. We travelled with a column as far as Villotte, and then the troops struck away to the north in the direction of Vaubenoit. In answer to questions at

Villotte, it was not to be learned that any German troops had taken the road to Bar-le-Duc, which lies through that village. There had been fighting, the villagers lyingly said, somewhere to the south-west, and the road to Bar-le-Duc ran south-west. Going on upon chance, we presently came into a deeply-wooded defile, extending for several miles. Not a German was visible; indeed, nothing human was to be seen. The place was calculated to make one nervous, especially when one's driver had a fixed belief that there was a Frenchman behind every stump. He was a Luxemburger, and therefore theoretically a neutral, but I think he sympathised with the *grande nation*.

Possibly no reader has ever practised the art of reconnoitring from an open carriage, and I may describe the process. You cautiously advance till you reach an angle; then you steal round it and halt, and sweep the whole front and flanks with your binocular. Nothing suspicious is visible, so you trot along the straight till you approach another turn, when you repeat the cautious tactics. You get along at the rate of about two miles and a half an hour. If you see anything suspicious, such as the smoke of a camp fire, you cautiously retire your machine and make a pedestrian reconnoissance. Of course, with all this caution, we reached Vaires in perfect safety, and found it full of Bavarian cavalry, who told me that their army was in great force in Bar-le-Duc and ever so much

farther forward. About two hours after we got into Bar-le-Duc we saw the old King arrive in his open travelling carriage. He had spent the previous night at Commercy. His quarters were in the largest house in the town, the Banque de France, on one of the charming Boulevards by which this very pretty town is surrounded. The Bavarians were very proud at being permitted to find him his guard, and I confess I pitied the two sentries on the door, who had to present arms on an average of about four times a minute. A Bavarian regimental band played in front of the Royal quarters in the early evening, and King Wilhelm came out and placidly smoked his cigar on the balcony, listening to the music. The townsfolk could not understand the quiet, homely way in which the Royal state of the Prussian monarch is conducted. When the French Emperor passed through on his way to Metz he, too, slept at the Banque de France, but he was surrounded by a cordon of guards, sentries, and police spies. The people made no secret of the fact that they liked the Prussian way of doing business best. The hotel-keepers remarked that they got their bills paid as if the generals were tourists, whereas the French gave promises to pay when the war should be over. During the day about thirty thousand men of the Crown Prince's army passed through the town—chiefly Bavarians. The light blue of the Bavarian uniform does not wear well in point of looks—it gets soiled in no time and then

even the officers look seedy. The helmet, too, is a creation of intensest ugliness. It has no split crow in gold on the front, but the letter "L" for the King's initial, and it is surmounted by a ridgy tuft of upstanding bear's-skin that looks like a dolly. But the Bavarian soldiers, spite of an ugly uniform, were fine fellows, and right serviceable-looking soldiers. The Crown Prince had given them some notable lessons in marching, and they had thrown away everything not essential, the very officers carrying their own kits in knapsacks on their backs. There were no led horses with portmanteaus, few pack waggons, and none of the impedimenta to which Prince Frederick Charles's army was somewhat addicted. The men did not seem very uniform in size, and toward the tail of the regiment some of them ran smaller than would be admitted in the German service. But they were smart, clean-built fellows, with an elastic spring in their step, and bright, keen eyes, and altogether had a fighting look about them; and Weissemburg and Wörth were evidence that their actions corroborated their looks. Their cavalry was smart enough, but not very brilliantly mounted. The horses seemed more of the work-animal pattern than those of the Prussian Dragoons or Uhlans, but looked good weight-carriers, and had lost wonderfully little in flesh considering what had been taken out of them.

What a grand old motto is *festina lente!* In the early

morning of the 25th, in full conviction that in two or three days the King and the Crown Prince, according to the programme then current, would be in Châlons, we started off thither, glad in the belief that we were so well to the front. It was, I believe, in the forenoon of the 25th that the change of tactics was arranged consequent on the discovery of MacMahon's movement to the north; thus, when the troops about Bar-le-Duc were commencing that wonderful series of marches which brought them on the right flank of the French in the valley of the Meuse, we were jogging contentedly towards Vitry. In the worm-eaten old fortress we found a couple of battalions, the place having been abandoned by the Mobile garrison on the approach of the German troops, the curious miscellaneous assortment of guns having been partly pitched into the moat, partly left on the ramparts. The day after the evacuation several hundreds of the garrison had been surrounded in a wood by a comparative handful of Uhlans and made prisoners, after firing a few harmless volleys. The garrison of Vitry and the troops in the neighbourhood received orders on the 26th to march to the northward; but no explanation of the reason accompanied those orders, and nobody in Vitry had any knowledge as to the radical alteration in the situation. The march to the north was regarded as simply a slight diversion, and none doubted that MacMahon was falling back from the camp of Châlons. The road to Châlons

then seemed still the chief thoroughfare for the advance of the German army, and off for Châlons we set by the southern bank of the Marne. During the whole journey we saw but one German—an officer driven in a gig by a peasant, and engaged in noting the bridges and fords on the Marne. The timid country people, anxious to sell their produce, continually begged of us to tell them whether they could get into Vitry. We might have been in a land of profound peace, so far away seemed everything warlike. When we reached the iron gates where the municipals of Châlons collect the octroi dues, it was matter of surprise that there stood no men in spiked helmets on sentry there. On we drove into the town, through streets thronged with people gossipping and gesticulating; and still never a German uniform was visible. Relinquishing our intention of halting at a hotel, we pushed right on, trying to look as unconcerned as possible, till we got on the further boulevard, where a well-intentioned townsman stopped us to say that if we went much further there were Germans still about who were sure to requisition our vehicle. Thanking him for form sake we pressed on till, some two miles outside of Châlons on the road to Suippes, we overtook an officer and five men of the Black Hussars, the last of the troops who had evacuated Châlons for the march to the north. This party we accompanied to Suippes, where we were on the extreme left flank of the German army. What boots

it to narrate the little good purpose to which, chasing the shadows thrown out by defective information, we spent the days from the 27th to the 31st—how we were carried prisoners by an over-zealous train officer to Turane, where Prince Albrecht, commanding the cavalry covering the flank, blew him up for his officiousness—how we tracked back toward St. Menehould and then north to Vouziers, where we saw francs-tireurs shot, and the villages burnt in which they had fired on the German patrols—how on the 30th, passing through deserted camp after deserted camp of MacMahon's army, we were within a short distance of the surprise of Beamont without knowing it, and how at length in the afternoon we came into Chemery by the southern road as the Crown Prince, with the 5th Army Corps, came down by the eastern from Stonne? Where the two roads join at the end of the dismal village he halted, and regiment after regiment, first of the 11th and then of the 5th Corps, marched past him, dusty, fagged, but full of fight. Then there was a rattle of wheels, and the carriages containing the King and his staff drove up, and halted in the dusty road while Wilhelm dismounted, and stood by his son till the last proviant waggon of the 5th Corps had filed past, and till his uniform was so white with the dust that you might have taken him for a venerable baker who had mounted a sword and a helmet. Then he laid his hand on his son's arm, and the pair walked slowly up a narrow

lane to the right between two gardens. For awhile father and son stood talking earnestly, the senior with his hand on the other's shoulder, the younger holding an unfolded map in his hand and talking earnestly. Then Von Moltke and Blumenthal were beckoned up out of the throng of staff officers, and presently Von Roon and Podbielski. The open air council of war lasted for nearly half an hour, and then the King left Chemery at a brisk trot, crossed the valley to Malmy, and went off down the further side of the canal to his head-quarters for the night at Vendresse. In the lane between the gardens, as I afterwards learnt, it was decided that the crushing blow should be dealt next day instead of being postponed, as originally intended, till the 2nd of September.

It was entirely by chance that, unattached as we were to anything or anybody, while posting letters in Vendresse about seven o'clock on the morning of the 1st September, we heard that there was fighting going on to the north, in the valley of the Meuse. The King had been out of bed and away ever since the early morning—gone, one of the Royal gendarmes sagely informed us, to visit the battle of the previous day but one. Of course we started at once, found the road utterly deserted, and, taking the wrong branch at the fork, came down into the valley of the Meuse nearly as far west as Mezières, and for the time at least out of view of the great battle that

was raging as we trotted rapidly forward. But the whole valley was resonant with the din of battle. Away to our right we could hear the crash of the artillery fire at Sedan. Over against Donchery, midway between Sedan and Mezières, the blazing villages sent baleful flakes of flame up into the bright sky. At Mezières itself the Würtembergers, from the top of the heights between us and the town, were replying with shells and musketry to the cannon from the bastions and the spiteful whirr of the mitrailleuses from the glacis. As we came down into the valley we passed through large French camps with the fires still burning. This had evidently been the scene of a surprise. The men had left their camp-kettles on the logs and their knapsacks in the lines ; they seemed to have hurriedly snatched their arms and made off, some indeed having gone away without the preliminary ceremony of grasping their rifles. Here and there, but at rare intervals, were strewn corpses of men and horses, and the hospital flag was flying from several houses. Ere we left the height we saw regiment after regiment of Würtembergers press out of the village of Flize up on to the bluff which overhangs the town, and stand there blazing away at something that seemingly lay between them and the town, while the great guns of the fortress tried in vain to dislodge them. Reaching Flize I found several regiments of Würtembergers drawn up and in a high state of excitement by reason of the

easy manner in which they had driven the enemy close up under the walls of Mezières. It had been a running skirmish for several miles in length and breadth. The French on the previous night had broken down a wooden suspension bridge crossing the Meuse close under the east of Flize. The suspension cables were composed of strands of fine wire; one of them only was cut, and the floor of the bridge had turned a complete somersault over the still standing wire, lying upside down in the bed of the river. The Würtembergers had, about midnight, thrown a pontoon across in twenty-five minutes, and followed up the pursuit on the northern river flat, while they continued to press the French towards the town on the southern knolls and heights. About the time we arrived the latter had been driven in a huddled mass on to the exposed glacis of the fortress, and were struggling for entrance at the gates. The Würtembergers from the heights, disregarding the feeble and ill-directed fire from the guns that ought to have covered the French retirement into the fortress, poured down volley after volley of musketry into the chaotic mass lying below them. Then just as we reached the height a battery opened fire with shells, and caught the range of the entrance gate through the fortress wall at the first shot. Two streams were meeting and battling at this entrance; the block was complete, when a shell hurtled into its midst, and, exploding as it fell, blew the densely-packed human

mass, mangled and bleeding, in all directions. This terrible fire of shells never ceased till the Frenchmen were inside the great gate; and many there were that tried to enter whom the bursting shells forbade not only to enter but to live. The officer in command of the Würtembergers told us that he had no intention of assailing the fortress itself till further orders, and that he had complied with his instructions when he had chased the French inside of it. The guns were roaring up the valley at Sedan, and if we made haste we might yet be in time to see some fighting there. So we went off rapidly towards Sedan along the great chaussée, and reached a knoll behind the village of Frenois, which commands a view of the whole valley, just in time to witness the last of a series of brilliant cavalry charges made by the French Chasseurs d'Afrique, which went far to annihilate that body of dashing horsemen.

Sedan, a fortress of considerable strength, with a moderate-sized town, lies round the convex side of a northern bend of the Meuse. On the south-east, toward Wadelincourt and Balan, there were considerable artificially-caused inundations which materially added to the strength of the place on that side. Further to the south-west, and on both sides of the river, spreads out a considerable alluvial tract, probably at one time a lake. Near the centre of the northern section of this is, or rather was, the large village of Bazeilles. On the west side of the

town the configuration of the ground is more complicated. The river quits the town in a north-westerly direction, leaving the suburb of Torcy on the south, and presently trends away north-west by north for a stretch over two miles. Doubling back with considerable abruptness it comes back nearly due south a distance of about three miles, skirting near the foot of this second stretch the grounds of the Chateau Bellevue, and impinging rather abruptly on the high ground by the village of Frenois, which diverts its course in a westerly direction towards Donchery. By this loop a peninsula is enclosed, which a canal across the isthmus converts wholly into an island —the island which for several days formed the wretched prison of the captured French army. At the angle where, on the side nearest Sedan, the canal leaves the Meuse, stands the village of Glaire; nearer Sedan, on the south side of the river, is the village of Torcy. On the southern side of Sedan a range of more or less abrupt high ground quits the bank of the Meuse above Wadelincourt (that is, on the south-eastern side of the town), and sweeping round envelopes a plain of some size till it comes closer to the river again at Frenois, after which it runs away parallel with the Meuse till broken by the river Bar running down northward from the low hills of the Argonne to join the Meuse not far from the village of Dom-le-Mesnil. This range comprises several eminences of considerable height: the loftiest is that just

above the town of Donchery, on the summit of which is the chateau of the same name,—the point from which the Crown Prince directed operations on the day of the battle. At ill-defined right angles from this range there runs out a lower rounded spur, which gradually lessens in elevation as the river comes to meet it at Frenois, and disappears altogether a few hundred yards further north. On its northern shoulder is built the Chateau Bellevue, which, from its moderate elevation, looks across the river and over the plain to Donchery in one direction, and down upon Sedan on the other, seeming from its position, as looked at from either place, to stand considerably higher than it really does. On the north side of the Meuse there is a range of high ground resembling in many points that on the south. Commencing behind Sedan, the heights on the north are less rugged and have their tops, as it were, shaved off, so as to constitute a tableland sloping ever towards the river. Round the top of the loop the heights come pretty close to the river, but they leave to the west of it the considerable plain of Donchery, and their slopes are easier, studded with villages and fields, alternated with woods. On the Sedan side of the loop the belt of meadow-plain left is narrower, but it attains a considerable width just opposite the village of Glaire. Depressions rather than ravines serrate the high ground rectangularly, one of these being close to the town of Sedan. Behind all rise the forest-clad

hills of the Ardennes, and the frontier is but a few miles off among those.

The Germans had driven the French out of the country on the south side of the Meuse, and the French lay along the northern bank. It may be said either that they had no proper front, or that they had three fronts. It was surely in some sense a front rather than a flank position, the extended face shown to the Bavarians and Crown Prince of Saxony's army all the way from Bazeilles by Daigny back to Givonne. It was a very deep flank, if it could be called a flank, on which the 5th and 11th Corps fell on the west after their circuitous march to the head of the loop. But the nominal front may be said to have stretched along the river, with the fortress for its centre, whose fortifications were manned, and in and about which was accumulated the French train and other impedimenta.

Of the masses which fought so toughly with the Saxons and Bavarians on the north-east and south-east of the town, or of the character of the battle that raged all round that side, I can say nothing as an eye-witness. But when I came in sight of the ground a large force of French infantry, cavalry, and artillery held the broad, flattened top of the bluff height next but one to the fortress on the westward side of the town and the northern bank of the river. The great focus of interest to me was this flattened bluff standing forward into the valley, and bounded on

the Sedan side as I have described, on the Mezières side by a wider depression, which, rising gradually, ultimately loses itself almost imperceptibly on the higher ground. This depression forms a sort of bay, round which sweeps the high ground, which then extends all the way westward as far as opposite Donchery, more or less elevated, and crested everywhere by a dense wood. In the very centre of this bay there rises an isolated knoll or mamelon, nearly to an equal height with the high ground flanking the bay, and affording a remarkable position for assailing with advantage the table land on which stood the French; since, crowned with wood, it formed admirable cover for any troops advancing from the west along the low ground, who had full opportunity to make all their dispositions without exposing so much as a helmet. And then, there was the choice either of standing on the top of the mamelon and firing across, of going to the left up the valley on to the height, or of debouching on to the low river-flat to the right, and from there assailing the table land where its slope was least abrupt, and where a road up its face was calculated to afford material assistance to an attacking party. That the Germans fully appreciated the strategical value of this mamelon became speedily apparent.

In the small hours of the morning, the 11th and the 5th Army Corps, which, after passing through Chemery, had pushed on to make their bivouac between Dom and

Donchery, had crossed the Meuse by two pontoon bridges below their bivouac. The latter corps had struck up at once right out of the valley to the edge of the forests cresting the upper ground, and had then come left shoulders forward through the upland farms and villages, having to fight their way smartly as they progressed, and leaving a track of fire and smoke behind them. As we came into the valley above Flize, the line of this advance was already marked by those lurid insignia. The 11th Corps, on crossing the stream, right inclined considerably sooner than the 5th; and kept on the lower ground, while they bored on forward to round the top of the loop. Thus those two corps were marching on the right flank of the French, or on what I prefer to regard as having been its right face. Up till nine o'clock the battle, in this direction at all events, had been confined chiefly to artillery, but, soon after, the 5th Corps had got to close quarters away on the further upland, and the left of the 11th Corps was even sooner in the thick of it, nearer the river and adjacent to the place where the depression in which stands the mamelon loses itself on the upland. The French artillery first essayed in vain to stay the resolute progress of the German troops. Then their cavalry charged again and again—lancers, cuirassiers, and chasseurs-à-cheval—hurling themselves on the ever-advancing columns, with a courage which all who witnessed it unite in calling

heroic. But the bayonets bore them back, as bayonets, in the hands of resolute disciplined infantrymen, will ever bear back horsemen, and then the two infantries came together, and the engagement at this point became close and general.

While these things were being transacted on the upland, a manœuvre was in progress for taking avail of the advantage which the isolated mamelon rising out of the centre of the embayed depression, was calculated to afford. There gradually massed behind it a large force of infantry and several batteries of artillery, belonging, no doubt, to the right division of the 11th Corps. More than one regiment and battery occupied the summit, and fired across point blank, replying with advantage to the direct cannon and mitrailleuse fire of the French from opposite, by reason of their advantageous position among the trees, while they also found opportunity to throw in a raking fire upon the left shoulders of the French infantry engaged with the Germans up at the head of the bay. A couple of regiments, under cover of this fire, dashed up the bottom of the depression on to the table land, and took the fighting Frenchmen on the flank, hurling them back, and leaving their guns and mitrailleuses in a position from which they had to retreat to prevent their own capture. The Germans then pressed the French steadily backward across the table-land toward

the ravine on the side of Sedan, not without desperate fighting and heavy loss. As they were being thus pushed back, the French flank came within the range of two or three batteries of Bothmer's Bavarian division, which had from the first been stationed on the opposite side of the Meuse, on a rising ground running out into the flat a little to the eastward of the village of Frenois. But this was at long range, and did not do all the execution which the leaders must have desiderated. Therefore, from behind the mamelon in the bay, there issued to the right a German infantry brigade of the 11th Corps and a battery of artillery. The little force skirted the plain at the base of the high ground till it came in a direct line with the fire of the Bavarian guns playing on the height over their heads. There, in the meadow opposite, in and about Floing they had a sharp brush with a regiment of French cuirassiers of the Guard, who had been stationed in a hamlet on the verge of the meadow. The cuirassiers, with their floating horsehair plumes and their long, straight swords, charged home knee to knee like gallant soldiers as they were; but we saw about half a dozen batches of white smoke, and then a broken, straggling stream of horsemen hurriedly breasting the steep by the terraced road that runs up it, leaving their track chequered by fallen men and horses. The terraced road was then followed by the battery, the brigade of in-

fantry struggling up, regardless of a path. The little force was wholly protected from the enemy's fire so long as it kept under the brow, and was further advantaged by the Bavarian fire, which was whistling high over its head. That fire stopped as the helmet spikes showed on to the table land, with the battery flanking it, the whole looking straight into the right flank of the Frenchmen retreating towards Sedan. The artillery began its measured booming; the infantrymen plied the needle-gun. It seemed as if the French retreat must become a rout. But there was still left heart among the Frenchmen for an attempt to hurl at least this last thorn in their side off the table land into the plain by the Meuse. At a gallop through the ragged intervals in the confused masses of the infantry came dashing the Chasseurs d'Afrique. The squadrons halted, fronted, and then wheeled into line, at a pace and with a regularity which would have done them credit in the Champ de Mars, and did them double credit, executed as was the evolution under a warm fire. That fire, as one could tell by the dying away of the smoke jets, ceased all of a sudden, as if the trumpets which rang out the "Charge!" for the Chasseurs had sounded also the "Cease firing!" for the German artillery and infantry. Not a needle-gun gave fire as the splendid horsemen crashed down the gentle slope with the velocity of an avalanche. I have seen not a few cavalry charges, but I never saw a finer

one, whether from a spectator's or an adjutant's point of view, than this one of the Chasseurs d'Afrique. It was destined to a sudden arrestment, and that without the ceremony of the trumpets sounding the "Halt." The horsemen and the footmen might have seen the colour of each others' moustaches (to use Havelock's favourite phrase), when along the line of the latter there flashed out a sudden, simultaneous streak of fire. Like thunder claps sounding over the din of a hurricane, rose the measured crash of the battery guns, and the cloud of white smoke drifted away towards the Chasseurs, enveloping them for the moment from one's sight. When it blew away, there was visible a line of bright uniforms and grey horses struggling prostrate among the potato drills, or lying still in death. Only a handful of all the gallant show of five minutes before were galloping backward up the slope, leaving tokens at intervals of their progress as they retreated. So thorough a destruction, by what may be called a single volley probably the oldest soldier now alive never witnessed. The cavalry blotted out, still the French infantry found courage in despair for one last effort. It was to almost certain death, and to absolutely certain defeat, that that straggling line came on, irregularly firing as it pushed forward. Rushes of impotent passion burst out from parts of the line; other parts only staggered slowly forward, as if against a high wind. What came of the effort it

was hard to tell in the distracting medley, till the time came for one to go on to the battle-field, after the combatants had quitted it. Under the veil of white smoke the tattered line of infantrymen seemed gradually to melt away, without having ever come to close quarters with the enemy, who stood so solidly pouring his fire into its teeth; but that some, both of the horsemen and the footmen, must have got somehow to the brink of the slope, seemed evident from the fact that dead men of both arms lay after the battle either on the road which slanted up the steep, or huddled at its bottom, as if either their impetus had overshot the mark, or they had been pitched over by the German infantrymen, who kept so tight a hold of the position on to which they had struggled.

Meanwhile the Bavarians from Bazeilles on the eastward of Sedan, the Saxons by Daigny and Givonne on the north-eastward, and the Prussian Guards edging round till they had reached due north of the town, were steadily, and with very hard fighting, driving in the French on their respective fronts. Pressing still to their own right, the right flank of the Guards began to touch the ever further and further overlapping left of the 5th Corps, till at length the junction was complete, and there was no thoroughfare through lines composed of soldiers such as those. And so the French host was environed and cut off from the frontier and from escape in that direction by a semicircle round Sedan, the

chord of which was the Meuse. Then the Meuse on its south side was lined by Bavarian and Prussian troops, and the investment was complete. The citadel could not hold half the French infantry, to say nothing of the cavalry, artillery, and train; the town, it was seen from the battle-field, was densely packed even on to the exposed side of the glacis; and it seemed, as the firing gradually died away, almost to nothing, before three o'clock, that the battle was surely over. A report, indeed, ran round that the place, and all that was in it, had capitulated; but that this was premature was shown by the recommencement of artillery fire from the south-east between four and five. At what or at whom this fire was directed, none in our vicinity could tell, till volumes of black smoke, rising from inside the ramparts, gave indication that the city itself was the mark. The French had almost abandoned the semblance of resistance, and I saw no attempt at replying to this bombardment, which was over and past by five o'clock, and then the stillness was something painful, in contrast with the fearful din of the day. Before darkness fell the Germans had drawn back off the battle-field, and had surrounded the whole town with a cordon of artillery. The guns stood unlimbered and ready pointed at the town—24 batteries, 144 guns—a gentle hint of what were the German intentions in the morning if resistance should be persevered in.

My companion and myself had some expectation,

judging from the aspect of affairs, that toward the close of the afternoon the French were concentrating for one last effort to break out in a due northerly direction; and anxious to be in the vicinity if this should occur, we had crossed the Meuse by a rope ferry at the village of Glaire, and pushed across the corpse-flecked plain into the dead-littered village of Floing at the further side. As we were clumbering up the steep on to the upland plateau, there rose suddenly, from the dense masses of troops collected on the southern swell, a hoarse roar of cheering, caught up, as if by infection, by the men of the 11th Army Corps in the bay around the mamelon, and on the plateau. From mouth to mouth flew the tidings that the French Emperor had sent his sword to the German King, that the whole French host were already virtually prisoners of war, and that Sedan, with all that was in it and around it, was formally to capitulate in the morning. From where we were we saw nothing of the aide-de-camp with the flag of truce, or of the grand sensational scene of his interview with the German monarch. The ferry-boat was on the wrong side of the stream, and before we got over once more to the south side, the King had set off on his return journey to Vendresse, the Crown Prince had vacated his hill and had taken the road back to Chemery, the flushed and wearied fighting men had commenced preparations for their bivouac, and the autumn twilight was fast descending. We came back past the Chateau

Bellevue and through Frenois to Donchery. The mean town looked like a city of the dead, for every inhabitant seemed to have deserted it, save only the woman who kept the hotel. I contrived to obtain quarters in it, and presently there arrived a body of staff officers. These confirmed the tidings we had heard, but could give no specific details. A meagre supper was served, eked out by a few boxes of sardines, with which we happened to be provided, and it was being eaten when suddenly a message came that Bismarck would join the party. An officer who had constituted himself caterer went into the kitchen to see what could be procured for the great Count. Alas! the unhappy hostess, with many *mon Dieus*, protested that unless they chose to eat herself, there was nothing to be had save only eggs and bacon. On this modest fare accordingly, washed down with champagne, Bismarck made a hearty supper; but before he began to eat, he made a formal statement, reading from a despatch, to the effect that the Emperor of the French had communicated to the King the surrender of his sword. Bismarck reserved comments on this announcement, but led off a hearty cheer, and then, like a jovial fellow, gave the toasts of "The King," and "The Fatherland."

Before going to sleep I took a walk round the half-obliterated ramparts which surround the once fortified town of Donchery. The scene was very fine. The whole

horizon was lurid with the reflection of fire. All along the valley of the Meuse, on either side, were the bivouacs of the German host. Two hundred thousand men lay here around their King. On the horizon glowed the flames of the burning villages, the flicker occasionally reflecting itself on a link of the placid Meuse. Over all the quiet moon waded through a sky cumbered with wind clouds. What were the Germans doing on this their night of triumph? Celebrating their victory by wassail and riot? No. There arose from every camp one unanimous chorus of song, but not the song of ribaldry. Verily they are a great race these Germans—a masterful, fighting, praying people; surely in many respects not unlike the men whom Cromwell led. The chaunt that filled the night air was Luther's hymn, the glorious—

"Nun danket alle Gott,"

the Old Hundredth of Germany. To hear this great martial orchestra singing this noble hymn under such circumstances was alone worth a journey to Sedan, with all its vicissitudes and difficulties. We had a domiciliary visit in our bed-room during the night from a couple of Generals in civil but exacting search for blankets to cover them as they lay on the floor of the *salle à manger*.

Next morning we rose with day-break, intending to get as close to Sedan as possible, that we might watch the critical state of affairs, and take the earliest opportunity of getting inside the city. Whencesoever he had

come—it was rumoured that he had spent the night in Donchery—there sat on his horse at the corner of the market-place a sad-faced French general with red eyes, as if he had not slept. This I afterwards learned was General Count Reillé. Ever as he tried to wedge his horse into the narrow throat of the street leading to the bridge, and so on to the road leading to Sedan, he was baulked by the steady ceaseless stream of proviant-waggons and munition tumbrils, and he smiled a weary forced smile as he drew his horse back out of the press. At length an adjutant made a way for him, and he was gone. He could not have been across the bridge when at the same corner of the market-place showed the tall form and square shoulders of Bismarck on his powerful bay horse. There was no redness about his eyes; it must have been past one in the morning when he drank his last glass of champagne in the Hôtel de Commerce, it would be rash to say how long he had been at work after that; and yet here he was before the Mairie clock had chimed the hour of six, fresh, hearty, clean-shaved, steady of hand, and clear of throat, as the voice proved in which he bade the column-men give him space to pass. He wore a blue military cloak and the undress cap of the cuirassier regiment of which he is the colonel. On such a morning where Bismarck was there for sure would there be momentous doings, and we followed in his tracks as soon as possible. We lost him,

however, on the farther side of the bridge, but learnt he had ridden on toward Frenois, and so followed that road. About two kilometres beyond Donchery we met a rather shabby open carriage drawn by two horses, driven by a coachman with a gold band. It contained four French general officers, and a fifth, the one we had seen in the market-place of Donchery, rode behind by the side of the ubiquitous Bismarck. The hour was ten minutes past seven. There was no escort, or anything, save the circumstance that the occupants of the carriage were French generals, to mark out the equipage as anything exceptional. We were barely past, when by a common impulse my companion and myself exclaimed, "That's Napoleon!" We dismounted, and returned walking behind a line of wains which were going the same way as the carriage. Sure enough, on the right-hand side of the back seat there sat the Emperor—that grey face of his, impassive and sphinxlike as ever, but with its lines drawn and deepened as if by some spasm. He wore a general's uniform, with a cavalry cloak, which was thrown open, and showed the decorations on his breast. In no other respect did he differ from his companions in dress.

The modest cavalcade went on about a hundred yards, and then halted in front of a small wayside house on the left-hand side of the road as one goes from Frenois to Donchery. The cottage into which the Emperor went on alighting was the right-hand cottage as one looks out

on to the chaussée, one of a block of three mean two-storied brick houses inhabited by families of weavers. The houses stand some twenty or twenty-five feet back from the road. In their front is a narrow level of gravelled path—at the edge of this, in front of the right-hand house were placed the chairs for the Emperor and Bismarck—and then there is a grassy slope down to the ditch bounding the road. It was in obedience to a sudden request of the Emperor that the modest *cortége* halted at the wayside house. I saw him turn round in his seat, and heard the request he made to the Prussian Chancellor. Immediately on alighting, the Emperor walked hurriedly to the rear of the house, and presently returned and went inside for, at the most, five minutes. The three officers occupying the carriage had gone inside at once, and were followed by Bismarck and his mounted companion. Then the Emperor and the Chancellor came outside again and sat down on two chairs which were fetched for them by the weaver who lived downstairs. Some chairs were brought out also for the French generals, but not enough, so one or two of them lay down on the grass bank in front of the left-hand cottage, and were presently joined by several officers of the German staff. One of the French generals, the Duke de Moskowa I think, seemed to have been wounded, and dragged one of his legs heavily behind him. On a table in rear of the block of houses, there had been set out a

couple of bottles of country wine with glasses, and one of the French generals, I shall not say which, kept popping round the corner to pay his devoirs to the sour tipple.

When the interview between the Emperor and Bismarck commenced—at twenty minutes past seven by my watch—Bismarck stood with cap in hand, but, as it seemed, in compliance with an injunction from Napoleon, accompanied with a bow and a slight smile, the Chancellor covered himself and sat down beside the other. Then an earnest conversation ensued. The Emperor occasionally smiled and made a remark, but it was evident that Bismarck was doing the greater part of the talking, and that, too, energetically. From our position we could just hear the murmur of Bismarck's voice when he raised it at those points where he thought it necessary to give emphasis by the gesture of bringing the forefinger of the left hand sharp down on the palm of the right. The occupant of the first floor of the right-hand cottage was all the while overlooking the pair out of his front window. Along the road streamed the ceaseless current of a proviant column, the rude teamsters glowering greedily at the strange scene by the road-side—a scene the like of which is not in the history of our century—and exclaiming occasionally in their uncouth curiosity, "*Wo ist der Napoleon, den?*"

A little after eight von Moltke drove up from the direction of Donchery, and after joining in the conversa-

tion for a quarter of an hour, went away again. Bismarck followed him, mounted, at a sharp trot, and the French party was left to itself. The Generals remained seated in a clump. The Emperor took to stalking moodily up and down a path in the potato-plot by the side of the cottage, limping slightly as he walked, and smoking hard. After a spell of this exercise, he came and sat down among his Generals, still retaining an almost total silence, while they spoke and gesticulated with considerable animation, and, as it seemed occasionally, a little confusedness. A little after nine there came up at the trot from Donchery a half troop of the 1st Sleswig Cuirassier Regiment of Life Guards. The Cuirassiers, with trained celerity, formed a semicircle around the back of the house. The burly lieutenant dismounted two of his men, and without a glance at the sitting party or the semblance of a salute, marched them close up to the cottage-wall just behind the Emperor's chair, halted them, gave loudly the order "Draw swords," and then gave them their orders in an undertone. I noticed the Emperor glance backward at this arrangement, as if he did not half like it. There was a flush on his face, the first evidence of emotion he had manifested. At a quarter to ten Bismarck came back among the staff, which by this time had accumulated on the road in considerable numbers, and Moltke's lean face was visible in the crowd on the road. He did not seem

to care about having more to say to the Frenchmen, and never went up the slope. Bismarck now wore his cuirassier helmet and looked quite martial, but rather heated, and no wonder, for he had taken a stretching gallop back in the direction of Vendresse to meet his master the King. The King and his two great subjects, the civilian Bismarck and the soldier Moltke, met on the road at the foot of a steep slope about four kilometres backward from Donchery toward Vendresse and Chemery. An estaminet stands just opposite the spot of meeting, the portly proprietor of which watched from a distance the hurried council of war which took place in the field by the roadside, and took the pains to mark with an axe the tree against which the King leant when the momentous consultation was in progress.

Wiping his hot face, Bismarck strode up to the sitting Emperor, and as we know now, communicated the message from his master the King, and the arrangement as to the interim disposition of the illustrious prisoner. After a short interview he beckoned to the carriage, which had drawn off a little, and the Emperor entered it, followed by the Generals, and, still escorted by the Cuirassiers, the party drove off in the direction of Sedan. I followed as fast as I could, and caught up its track as it entered the grounds of the château appropriately named Bellevue, which overlooks the plain on which stands Sedan. In the grounds a regiment of Bavarians had

been bivouacking, but as the imperial party arrived they were marched out. The château consists of a centre block, with two wings joined to the centre by conservatories on the first floor. The chief front is towards the road. I was at the back of the house, but then the blinds were drawn down at the front, so I had rather the best of it. In the conservatory on the left were the French Generals; in that on the right was the Prussian staff. In the dining-room on the ground-floor of the central block von Moltke, Bismarck, and de Wimpfen were debating the terms of the capitulation. The Emperor, I gathered, was lying down on a sofa in the drawing-room on the first floor of the central turret, or in the boudoir which opens off it. No doubt he was weary and sick at heart, while it required no very keen eyes to discern that he was in bodily pain. And that had been a long trying wait there by the wayside from seven till ten, with little truly to lighten its monotony to the stunned, crushed man. A colloquy with Bismarck, stern of heart, sharp, if courteous of speech, unyielding in resolve, for an hour or more; for another hour or more a listless kicking of heels while the man who had vanquished should pronounce what was to be done with him. He, the Emperor of the French, the proudest monarch in Europe, kicking his heels on the roadside by a weaver's cottage while a Prussian count galloped to a Prussian king for instructions! If he were not too stunned to think at all, he must have thought at

times as he lay there that surely the morning's doings were one ghastly dream.

The deliberations as to the negotiations seemed likely, by the rumours which reached us, to last for some time, and quitting the precincts of the Château Bellevue, my companion and myself utilised the interval in visiting the battle-field. The tract charged over by the Chasseurs d'Afrique was a scene of terrible carnage. The Arab stallions ridden by this force had died very hard; in many cases they had with their struggles made graves before they had died for their riders and themselves. The burial parties did not have much trouble hereabouts in bringing corpses to the grave-pits. The difficulty was to clear a space on which to commence a grave-pit. Higher up on the tableland there was fearful evidence of the power of a shell-fire at short range. I counted five headless corpses within two hundred yards—their heads had been blown away as clean as if they had been guillotined. Men disembowelled, with their chests driven into fragments, with legs or arms blown away, were common spectacles. I found one man's leg about twenty-five paces distant from his body. Right on the battle-field we came on a friendly quartermaster, who was superintending the collection of biscuit barrels and wine casks that the French had left behind them in their hurried retreat. He placed at our service the contents of a barrel of biscuits, the outside of which was stained by a fluid which was

red, but was not wine; but bucket staves are not sponges, and the biscuits were very good, and we were very hungry.

After hurriedly traversing a corner of the battle-field my companion and myself determined to take our chance of being able to visit Sedan. We found German outposts, consisting of three men each, near the transverse passages leading through the glacis, and close to them bodies of Frenchmen without arms, who chatted freely with the German sentries. We got on to the glacis of the fortress with the greatest ease in the world, and found the soldiers lying on it to consist chiefly of Turcos and Zouaves, dirty fellows most of them, but certainly in better case to all appearance than the troops we found inside. Everybody was very friendly; wine was genially pressed on us, all the more warmly when we mentioned that we were Englishmen. One especially greasy and strong-smelling Turco, of a full Day-and-Martin colour, insisted vehemently on kissing us, and we had to submit to the oleaginous hug with what grace we might. Getting into the town was a different matter. The gates were closed, and opened only to admit the wounded as they were brought in on waggons. By the advice of this friendly Turco, who set us the example, we jumped on one of the waggons and passed in without interference. As rapidly as we could for the chaotic press, we traversed several streets of the town. We saw where

M'Mahon lay wounded, and also how full the town was of troops. They were swarming, densely packed, everywhere. Of the wounded, some were in the churches, the houses, and the public buildings, others lying unheeded and jostled in the courtyards; the dead were everywhere—in the gutters, trampled on by the living, on the swampy margin of the moat, littering the narrow way through the glacis and the fortifications, lying, some of them, on the steps of a church. The sight was one never to be forgotten—a sight of misery, chaos, disorganization, and general devilry, which assuredly was unique in this generation—an eddying sea of humanity, trampling recklessly over the dead and the wounded, the men now yelling for the blood of their officers, now struggling in fierce contention for a morsel of bread.

Hastening back to the Château Bellevue, we were yet too late for the announcement of the signature of the capitulation. We had seen nothing of that sensational incident—if it really did occur—when von Moltke, as is related, led outside the reluctant de Wimpfen, and weakened his obduracy by pointing to the ring of field guns unlimbered, and with the gunners in position, girdling the fated city, and ready at the word to commence a bombardment which would have been the synonyme for a butchery. But we were just in time with a sharp run to see the King up to the gates of the château, followed by

his son and the leading members of his staff, and to see the silent greeting—if words were spoken they must have been muttered in a low tone by men afraid to trust their voices—between the monarchs on the gravelled drive at the bottom of the steps. The "good brothers" turned, and mounting the steps, disappeared inside one of the rooms in the central block, the royal staff partly occupying one of the conservatories, partly remaining outside. The interview, that surely must have sorely tried the composure of both the parties to it, lasted barely some twenty minutes, and then Wilhelm was out and off in his carriage for a drive through his victorious Kinder bivouacking by the Meuse. He who was left in that inner room must have heard the air throb again with the cheering which came from German throats at the sight of the white-haired conqueror-king. Later in the afternoon I saw the Emperor again. He came out in front of the château to superintend the unpacking of his travelling carriage. He looked very wan and weary, although he still kept up the old impassible look. The imperial equipage in its magnificence was an extraordinary contrast to the simplicity of the modest turnout of the Prussian King. In gold and scarlet the outriders of the former glittered profusely. He of Prussia had his postboys in shoddy cloth, with glazed coverings to their hats to keep the dust off the nap.

The Emperor's barber, with whom I had a chat as the

suite waited for orders outside the château, gave me some interesting particulars regarding the last disastrous day in Sedan. The French army, he said, had its efficiency destroyed by socialism and a craving for a republic. It was in a chronic state of semi-mutiny, and many regiments would not follow their officers on any consideration. This yeasty condition of agitation made discipline an impossibility, and accounted for the disregard of discipline on their part, which had enabled the Germans so often to surprise their camps and drive them whithersoever they listed. M'Mahon was wounded in a vain attempt to excite one of these disaffected regiments to charge. The Emperor met him in the street as he was being carried half unconscious into his quarters. If my informant was truthful, Napoleon bore himself worthily during the disastrous day. Imitating his uncle at Montereau, he directed guns with his own hand, and was continually under fire. But the French were totally outmanœuvred and outnumbered. They had expected to have to cope with an army of 120,000 men; instead of this, nearly double the number started up unexpectedly, as if from the ground. The troops in Sedan candidly admitted to me that the Germans were better soldiers than themselves, although not braver men; and this is about the truth of the matter. They have a sense of responsibility which the French want; they are splendid marchers, they fight like devils, they are strong, self-

contained, self-respecting, earnest, manly fellows; they have generals who know how to direct them, and officers who know how to lead them, and this is why they came to go on accordingly from victory to victory.

Next morning (the 3rd September), we tried to get through Sedan with intent to go a little way into Belgium. There was thoroughfare only one way and for one class of persons. The gate was surrounded by a guard of Bavarians, and a continuous stream of French prisoners, horse, foot, and artillery, was fast passing out. We watched it for hours—it seemed as if it never would stint, and at last we abandoned the intention of getting through Sedan, and turned down the stream to the rope ferry which we had used the two previous days. When we got to the bridge over the canal, we came again upon the stream of French prisoners, flowing in the direction we were going. The tract between the canal and the Meuse is an island of some extent. The rope of the ferry was cut, and the boat on the other side. Skirting the Meuse downward for some distance, we found several ferries, but all the boats were, like the first, on the other side of the stream. The fact was, the Germans had utilised the island into a prison. They had turned the disarmed French army bodily into it to the number of some 70,000, looking to the Meuse and the canal to do the main duty of custodianship. It is true that here and there on the farther side there stood a company under

arms, and that towards nightfall a chain of sentries was run along the farther banks; but I do not believe that on the island itself there was a single German. The Frenchmen had been turned on to the island just as they came out of the town. The Germans themselves were temporarily short of rations, and could spare nothing for their prisoners. But the prisoners fared better than their captors, although goodness knows how they did it. After all nobody can achieve a savoury mess under difficulties like a Frenchman, or build himself a house where another man would have to be content with the heavens for his roof. Innumerable fires had been lit, about one seemingly serving three men. The fellows dragged out firewood from recondite corners in the most marvellous manner; recklessly tore down houses, and burnt doors, window frames, and rafters; broke up carts, ploughs, fences, and everything else available. On every fire was a saucepan, and in the saucepan were potatoes, and something else. Where the potatoes came from was plain enough; we could see the fellows delving them, but about the "something else," all that one could tell was that it smelt nice. There was a flavour of onions in the scent—I began to think Frenchmen have an onion bed somewhere about their persons—and a *soupçon* of garlic and a gamey whiff that made one's mouth water. Most of the men who were not cooking were building unto themselves habitations for the night. About half of

them had their *tentes d'abris*, which they were rigging up dexterously, and bedding with boughs torn from the trees. The trees were put under heavier contributions to build wherewithal leafy bowers of considerable architectural pretensions, and positively I do not think that, with the exception of the extremely late-comers, a single man of the captive French army slept this first night supperless and without some cover. They were the civilest, cheeriest, best-humoured set of fellows imaginable. We two, quite alone, and unable to bestow anything—for our flasks and tobacco-pouches were but drops in the bucket, and very soon exhausted—experienced no word but of the frankest courtesy and the heartiest friendliness, alike from officers and men. The officers had been allowed to retain their swords, having given their parole, but had to accompany their men, whose disarmament had been very thorough. On the island is a handsome château, with beautiful and extensive grounds, and of the cover there afforded the Frenchmen took avail extensively. I do not suppose that in the island they had much more room than in Sedan, but they preferred it for quarters, since they could get firewood and potatoes. A few stray barrels of biscuit had been brought into the island on carts, and their contents were distributed as far as they would go, but there was not a biscuit for every twenty men of the great multitude. After some conversation with a group of captains in the grounds

of the chateau, we strolled down towards the river, and accepted the invitation of a bivouac of Zouaves to join them at their supper. The mess was better than good, it was superb. It consisted of potatoes, the indescribable savoury "something," and flesh of some kind or other. The swarthy Zouaves, in their red fezes and baggy canvas breeches, treated us like princes, but evaded a direct reply to the question what was the meat in their mess. After we had bidden the merry rascals a hearty good night, we came upon the carcass of a horse that had been killed by a shell, and there was a clean slice or two out of its flanks. I did not think it necessary to go back to the Zouaves and put it to them point blank whether they had been regaling us on horse; but, like the man in the play, I had my own thoughts on the matter. It was late before we quitted the fires on the island; and when we were once outside and realised the difficulty of finding quarters, we were sorry we had not stayed and shared the bivouac of the Zouaves. Donchery we knew to have been invaded by a whole Army Corps; Frenois was seething full of Bavarians. As we were discussing the probabilities of a bivouac we drove past the front of the Château Bellevue. All was in darkness. A happy thought struck my companion. "Let us sleep here," he cried. The gardener seemed glad enough to have a couple of quiet civilians for his inmates. He stabled our horse and conducted ourselves into the chateau, one of

the most beautiful residences, both internally and externally, I have ever seen. The dining hall, where the capitulation was signed, was a model of taste without meretricious display. It was wholly in stained oak, save the roof, which is inlaid with American maple. The windows were Gothic, and in niches round the room there were alternately mirrors and Etruscan vases. One or two large pictures were let into the panelling, and in recesses were divans. The chairs were high backed, in finely carved oak. Above this room, up a winding staircase, and on the first-floor, was the bedroom occupied by the Emperor on the previous night, just in the state he left it. Before leaving at nine in the morning, he had breakfasted with his suite in the dining hall. On its beauties, as on those of the rest of the charming villa, we were free to feast; there was nothing else to satisfy the appetite. The gardener was very hungry himself and so was his wife. Nor, according to the gardener, was there a drop of wine in the house, and appearances certainly seemed to corroborate his asseveration. It fell to me to sleep in the bed occupied by the Emperor on the previous night. Sheets and a quilt were on the bed, but one of the window hangings, with its semicircular canopy, had been torn down, and applied as an additional covering for the couch of the Emperor. He had apparently been reading in bed, for a translation of Lord Lytton's "Last of the Barons" lay open turned on its face, on a

little table by the bed-head. There seemed something of a sombre significance in the selection.

At this time the chateau was inviolate; not so much as an ornament had been touched. The beautiful clocks ticked on every mantel-piece, and the pretty knick-knacks of the young ladies were sticking on the pin-cushions in their abandoned bedrooms. But about five in the morning there was an incursion of a Bavarian regiment, which during the night had been on guard over the prisoners on the island. Beyond doubt they did not use the place tenderly. The Bavarians are, out of sight, the most butter-fingered of the German soldiers, and anything conveniently portable they annexed with neatness and despatch. What the men wanted was wine, and what seemingly wanton damage they did to the wainscot, panelling, &c., was in quest of it, a quest in the end crowned with success.

By the 6th of September the King of Prussia was in Rheims, the self-constituted guest of the Most Reverend the Archbishop in that ecclesiastical dignitary's palace, hard by the historical old cathedral. There had been but a short stay for the German hosts on the field where they gained laurels so green and yet so bloody. The blood tint had hardly died out of the Meuse, the unburied dead yet festered in the sunheat, and the ruins of Bazeilles yet smoked and stank, when the vanguard of the Crown Prince's army shouldered their packs and trudged away

up the valleys of the Argonnes towards the fertile vine-lands of Champagne, marching nearly due southward but with their faces ever set Paris-ward, and "Nach Paris!" ever on their lips. Royal head-quarters made a long pause in the old cathedral city, while men all over Europe were asking one another whether the catastrophe of Sedan had not virtually ended the war, and looking for the white dove of peace to alight on the blood-stained battle-field. But the Revolution had taken place in Paris, and the leaders of the new Republic were flushed with the chimera that Republican institutions and untrained hordes of patriots, which at the talismanic name of "Republic" were sure to rush to arms eager to fight and proud to die for *la Patrie* emancipated, could cope with the generalship and the trained and victorious armies that had crunched the disciplined soldiers of the Empire as a boy cracks a nut. It was from the crisis of Sedan that may be dated the falling away of British sympathy from the German side. Wise and considerate men at home, who in the beginning had seen and readily owned to the justice of the cause in which Germany had fought and conquered, let their reason and their logical perception become enfeebled by a sympathy for misfortune which did honour to their hearts. With others the keynote to the changed feeling was kindliness for a Republic, a gushing abstract love for an institution which they reckoned a synonym for the truest of all national

liberty. A judicious alternative to this mild phase of mental aberration might have been discovered in an enforced residence in Paris during the months of March and April last. When Wilhelm went to war in the name of the German Fatherland, he put forth that he warred not with the people but with its ruler. That ruler gone, he was bound to look to some person or to some body, as the successor of the captive Emperor in some kind of right or other to dispose of the destinies of France. He could not make peace with the French nation in the gross; that nation must set up, whether for peace or for war, something tangible to be treated with by the victor, if it was to be peace; to direct war, if the nation's fiat was for war. The Provisional Government assumed this province, and was tacitly accepted by France. Then the nation through this, its mouthpiece, instead of suing for peace, instead of asking what terms it might expect if it should sit down content with the punishment it had received, cried "War, war to the hilt, war without a thought, a dream, a hint of negotiation!" Wilhelm had no help for it, but to accept what was virtually a new challenge, and fight on. And that challenge gave to him a new antagonist. He now fought, no longer with the man who was his prisoner, but with the French nation, with whom up till then he had proclaimed that he had no quarrel, and he fought with it, because it had taken up the quarrel that might have gone

with the *Déchéance*, and made it its own. The German did not quit his first position; France and the French drove him out of it whether he would or not. There was no alternative but to march on defiant Paris. Sympathy is a beautiful feeling; but its failing is that very often it clouds discrimination. Under the influence of effusive sympathy for France, who has not heard men plead—"Ah, but in the hour of her triumph Germany might have shown her magnanimity and offered terms to poor France, instead of coldly standing at attention waiting for her beaten foe to humiliate herself by suing for terms." For Germany to have acted thus would not have been magnanimity; it would have been quixotry, and quixotry certain to have been misinterpreted by France. Because the German arms only occupied as a formality a corner of Paris for a couple of days, did not Paris send up the defiantly-complacent yelp that it was fear which had made the occupation so transient and partial? Can international history point to a precedent in which the unquestioned victor, unweakened either by a single reverse or by a long war, fighting in a cause acknowledged as just by all the world, took the initiative in offering terms, either directly or indirectly, to an adversary so stubborn and haughty that it seemed like enough the profferer would have had them flung back in his teeth? Who ever heard of the gladiator in the arena, or the pugilist in the ring cry, "Hold, surely there is enough," while the oppo-

nent proclaimed himself still full of fighting, and refused to be led away by what in this case was an Europeful of judicious bottle holders?

While the King abode in Rheims, waiting for what never came, and while Europe was talking and scheming, and France was hardening her heart and stiffening her neck, the German armies were deploying into a grand line for the advance on Paris. Three great roads converge toward Paris from the east of France. On the southernmost of these leading from Châlons, through Tour de Montaimé, by Montmirail, Coulommiers, Chaulmes, and Brie Comte Robert, the head-quarters of the Crown Prince of Prussia it was arranged should march. The northern route is *viâ* Laon, Soissons and Dammartin, but the fortresses of the two first-named towns still held out, so that the 12th Army Corps and the Prussian Guards had tracks farther to the south perforce allotted to them. The central road from Châlons through Epernay is cut near Dormans, by the road that comes from Rheims, by Ville en Tardenoise, and thence continues its course through the beautiful valley of the Marne, threading successively, as in a string, the pretty towns of Château Thierry, La Ferté sous Jouarre and Meaux. Meaux was a pretty town once before the deluge came upon it. This central road was set down as common property for the right flank of the fourth army and the left flank of the third. Along it lay the track of the 6th Army Corps, which,

spared at Sedan, was to head the advance on Paris. Later it was to be traversed by the 2nd Bavarians, and later still by the 11th Army Corps, which had been left in the rear when its fellows marched out of the valley of the Meuse.

Dispositions covering a front so extensive, and having an object so vast and so momentous, were not made in a day. The men had to be rested after feats of fighting and marching not surpassed in the history of the world; supplies had to be accumulated near; communications had to be everywhere perfected and made good. Meanwhile the King took his ease in the archbishop's palace. Bismarck, in his yellow and white cap, stalked about the town alone, disregarding with a grim indifference the crowds of beggar boys who fancied they could recognise benevolence in the fact that they were not summarily sworn at by reason of their importunity, and only found out their mistake when they had haunted the stern man persistently to no purpose for half the length of a street. Moltke paced the aisles of the cathedral for hours at a time, with set face and abstracted eye, his hands ever clasped behind his back. Captains and subalterns, dashing Freiwilligen and gay Vicefeldwebel, made merry over the flowing champagne in the hotels and cafés, and wished that there was a Rheims at every halting spot. The soldiers ate and drank, sauntered and stared; dealing justly in uncouth and fragmentary French with the shopkeepers of the town, and essaying in a sheepish way to make a

little love to the girls, whose coquetry overcame even the conventional hatred. But although *festina lente* was the motto, there was no time to be wasted. On the 7th of September General von Tümpling, commanding the 6th army corps, had already his head-quarters in Dormans. The German Uhlans who, when they had ridden into Rheims on the Sunday previous, had all but seen the backs of Vinoy's men retreating, were far up the valley feeling the front at least two days before I reached Dormans on the 8th of September. I wonder how many British tourists are familiar with the rich, placid beauty of the valley of the Marne, otherwise than as seen from the window of a railway carriage. It will amply repay a much more detailed inspection. On the afternoon I climbed a little hill above Dormans, which overlooks the valley for several miles in both directions, and the view well repaid the exertion. On either side of the river lie flat and fertile "haughs," as the alluvial tracts are called in Scotland; and out of them rise almost imperceptibly the swelling knolls clad with vineyards in which the frequent villages nestle snugly. I counted ten villages from my hill-top. The whole valley was as quiet as if there was nothing but peace in the world. Presently, from one of the villages over against me, there arose the swell of military music; the band of a regiment was quartered in it, and was treating the villagers to a concert. I do not think I ever saw such a wealth of fruit of all kinds

as there was around Dormans. For the first time I realised how the Israelites might have been compelled to resort to a stake borne by two men to carry wherewithal the trusses of grapes from the vines of Eshcol. Apples and pears hung by the roadside like hips and haws in our hedgerows at home, alternated by trees laden with delicious golden plums. It made one glad that the troops were marching in peace through the valley of Dormans. It would have been desecration to sully this Eden by making it a battle-field. A quiet race were the people of the valley, sighing for quietude and for liberty, without plebiscites, and without severe taxation, to till their soil and live prosperously in their quiet way. They craved a strong and moderate Government, be it what it might —monarchy or republic. The landlady of an auberge where I halted for a short time put the matter to me very pithily. "I don't care a sou about politics," said she, "and we have been taught to abhor the Prussians, and specially to detest Bismarck; but, oh, how heartily do I wish that in France we had such a one as Bismarck!"

Now that the strain of the forced marching was somewhat abated, it was instructive to note how the Germans were resuming their rigour in little matters of detail and discipline. I saw the officer of the day turn out the quarter-guard the evening I arrived in Dormans, and he bullied the men as if the regiment had been in barracks, because their buttons were not polished and their coat-

cuffs not turned down. The soldiers were everywhere brushing and beating their clothes, or mending holes in them. In a shoemaker's shop there was a comical-looking row of soldiers, all sitting solemnly against the wall, each with a boot in his hand, waiting for his turn with the funny little French shoemaker, of whose continual jabber they understood not one word, but courteously replied with the invariable "Ja! Ja!" The Dormans tailor was hard at work repairing officers' uniforms; I wonder whether he was patriotic enough not to utilise the "cabbage."

Von Tümpling seemed in no hurry to advance from Dormans. Had he been dallying in Rheims, one might have apprehended that he had found his Capua, but pleasant place as was Dormans, every one said there were more eligible quarters and equally beautiful spots farther down the valley of the Marne. The truth is he was waiting till the 3rd army on his left should get approximately abreast of him. He was certainly near enough to his own front. On the 9th we started off with intent to make Château Thierry before we halted. About eighteen kilometres from Dormans we came to a bridge. The bridge itself was sound enough, but on the other side of it an embankment on which the road was made had been cut across by a trench. This was evidently the work of an enemy, but of an enemy destitute of the guidance of engineers, and ignorantly eager to oppose the German

progress. As might have been expected, the pitiful trench had been no great obstacle. It had been partially and hastily bridged, and thus we knew that friends were still ahead. About a kilometre farther we entered the village of Crezancy. Nobody had anything to say to us as we passed through the village; but when we got on the top of the hill beyond it, we found a sergeant's guard along with an officer. The latter told us that the post was the extreme infantry advance, and that we must not pass it. A few horsemen were scouting farther, but he had no assurance as to the state of the country, and he could not allow us to go on any farther. He was a fixture, he understood, for the day, and the forward movement had for the time been arrested. So there was no resource but to return to Dormans, where we learned that the head-quarters of the 6th Corps were not to move till the 11th, and perhaps not then.

Impatient of the inaction, it occurred to us on the morning of the 9th to start off in a southerly direction, inclining a little to the rear, so that thus we should strike the head of the more southerly advance. The place where we intersected the first east and west road was a village called Igny-le-Jard. There were no Germans there, and the villagers said they had seen none but a few scattered Uhlans. Our road then lay through a fine forest, intersected with rides for hunting purposes, and full of deer. At Mareaille, on its farther side, we came upon an ad-

vanced infantry-post—there was nothing beyond except cavalry, said the officer who commanded the handful of men. A few miles farther to the south, and we reached the charming village of Corbellieu, lying snugly by the little river Surmelin. In the environs was a beautiful chateau, surrounded with grounds, everywhere adorned with parterres of flowers, and intersected by artificial streams and lakes, crossed by bridges of fanciful construction. For miles the road lay through avenues of fine trees, on either side of which were rich farms or beautiful villas. We had passed Corbellieu for some miles, still edging rearward, when the towers of a castle became visible, and soon we entered the pretty village of Montmort, at the end of which, raised high over it on an eminence, partly natural and partly artificial, stands the castle of the same name. At one time, I doubt not, a castle of great strength must have occupied the summit of the commanding eminence. The site is one which the castle-builders of the middle ages must have thoroughly appreciated. From the wall encircling the esplanade I dropped an apple sheer into the street, two hundred feet below; a double moat surrounds the abrupt height, the top of which is reached externally by winding paths; internally, by a winding staircase up a turret built into the rock. The castle itself is comparatively modern. It was the property and the residence of the Marquis de Montmort, who, along with his daughter, had very sensibly

remained at home to receive the Germans instead of running away into Paris. He had for his guests the headquarters of a brigade of the 5th Army Corps, the officers of which, in consideration of the courtesy of the Marquis in doing the honours of his own house, exerted all their efforts to prevent intrusion on his privacy and towards the preservation of the amenities of the charming place.

Quitting Montmort we pushed on a few miles farther south to Etoges, which is on the great road. No German sentries were posted outside of it. We traversed it from one end to the other, and found it wholly French. Having left our carriage at the village auberge, we strolled towards a fine chateau in the environs, at the gate of which a courteous French gentleman accosted us. He was the son of the owner of the chateau, M. de Kirchener, son of an engineer officer who distinguished himself greatly in the Prussian service in the campaigns of 1813 and 1814. M. de Kirchener is himself married to a sister of the Duchess de Montebello. The old gentleman himself came out to meet us, in a little trepidation, and knotting around his waist as he came a scarf of the "Succour for the Wounded" pattern. The father and son courteously joined in urging our removal from the auberge to the more pleasant quarters which the chateau afforded; and there we spent the night with not a German soldier, so far as we knew, nearer to us than the outposts outside Montmort. There were, however, Ger-

man troops nearer Paris than Etoges, two squadrons of cavalry having passed through it in the morning.

Next morning (the 10th) we started westward for Montmirail, with intent to traverse a district memorable in the first campaign of 1814 as that in which, in a rapid series of battles within a very small space, Napoleon destroyed the army of Blucher. Soon after quitting Etoges we came upon the fine plain of Champ Aubert, on which was fought the battle of the 10th February, 1814. A monument stands in the centre of the battle-field, erected by "the Emperor Napoleon III." A couple of kilometres farther on we reached the village of Vauchamps, outside which took place the battle of the same name on the 14th February, in which Blucher's discomfiture was consummated. Passing through the pretty little town of Montmirail, we crossed a deep gorge and came out on a noble plateau, almost on the verge of which stands a fine fluted column, surmounted by a gilded eagle and bearing on its pedestal the announcement, dated 15th August, 1866, that "this monument was erected by the orders of the Emperor Napoleon III. to indicate the spot on which stood the Emperor Napoleon I. when he directed the efforts of the French army in the battle of Montmirail on the 11th February, 1814." On the other sides of this pretentious monument are the names of the other victories:—Feb. 12th, Les Caquerets, Nesle, Château Thierry; Feb. 11th, Mont-

mirail, Marchais; Feb. 10th, Champ Aubert; Feb. 14th, Vauchamps.

At Montmirail we passed through the advance brigade of the 5th Army Corps, which we had seen in Montmort the day before. The previous day had been a rest day, and the troops were fresh and thoroughly in good condition and spirits. About six miles in front of Montmirail, at a village called Vieuxmaisons, we found the battalion quartering itself which constituted the vanguard. There was nothing beyond except a few cavalry outposts, and although it was ascertained that there were no French troops in the immediate front, there was reason to believe, the officer told us, that there were detached little parties rancorously scouring the country, who might be more awkward customers for people like ourselves to encounter than regular soldiery. His advice coincided with our own opinion that we had got to the end of our tether on this lower road. There would be a further advance next day, no doubt, but in the meantime Vieuxmaisons afforded nothing whatever calculated to sustain life, it having borne the brunt of a squadron of hussars on the previous night. The officers of the 58th, a fine Silesian regiment, made us heartily welcome to a share of their rations, but thought it advisable to regain the valley of the Marne. So with a hearty farewell to the good fellows of the Posener Regiment, we struck across the low sierras to Château Thierry, crossing as we did so

the scene of the battle of Nesle and close to Château Thierry the battle-field of the same name, where Napoleon annihilated the remains of the corps of Sacken, which he had beaten previously at Montmirail ; and on our arrival found that Von Tümpling's head-quarters had come on into Château Thierry in the course of the afternoon. Château Thierry was taken and retaken several times, and three times sacked in the campaign of 1814, but had long lost the traces of its early misfortunes. On the occasion of the present visit of the Prussians there was no sack, and, indeed, very little scarcity. The people had for the most part stayed at home, and, disregarding the lies of the French newspapers as to the conduct of the German troops, had laid in goodly stores of eatables and drinkables, for which they found a ready market, at no doubt remunerative prices. A sagacious citizen told me he would not at all mind if the Prussians were to stop a month in the place, for they were far better customers than French soldiers, and most of the population seemed to be much of his mind. The officers chiefly frequented the Café du Midi, close to the Hôtel de l'Eléphant on the esplanade, and consumed their beer and coffee much as if they had been in the Fatherland. In this place I saw the first manifestation of a feeling of impotent insolence on the part of Frenchmen. As most readers are doubtless aware, it is the custom in Germany to bow to the company on entering a café, and to remain uncovered

while the stay lasts. While the café was at its fullest two young Frenchmen of the town entered with some noise, and without any recognition of the company laid hold of cues and monopolised the only billiard-table. At first they were unobserved by the German officers, but their loud laughter and exclamations presently attracted attention. Each wore his cap cocked on his head, and they two were the only covered persons in the room. A German lieutenant quietly arose, and removing the cap of one of them made him a bow, quietly said, "Pardon, Monsieur," hung the cap on a peg, and sat down. The young fellow looked as if he would fain be angry if he dared, but thought better of it, and went on with his game. His companion did not take the hint, but cocked his cap all the more defiantly, and I heard him whisper to his companion that he would not have stood the insult if offered to himself. A German officer sitting near me heard this too. He got up, walked solemnly to the Frenchman, took off his cap, chucked it out of the door, looked the Frenchman in the face for a minute, and then went back to his seat. The young fellow made a lame attempt to explain that he wore his cap because he had a cold, but nobody noticed him, and the pair went off, looking as impudent as they thought was safe.

On the 12th the head-quarters of the 6th Corps moved forward to the village of Nogent l'Artaud; but as several regiments had gone forward, we did so too, in hopes of

being able to spend the night in La Ferté sous Jouarre. From Nogent the valley of the Marne is exceptionally beautiful and fertile. The villages are plentiful and full of good houses, lavishly decked with flowers, and every slope is covered with vineyards. At times the valley is so narrow that there is room only for the river and the road, and the railway has to betake itself into a tunnel; then it widens into a charming flat on which lies a pretty village. I do not think that I ever saw a more beautiful village, both externally and internally, than Charly, about two miles west of Nogent. Almost all the houses were villas, and they stood embowered among trees amid a wealth of flowers. The soldiers, of which the place was full, seemed imbued with the influence of its beauty, and respected its amenity as far as was possible. From Charly we went forward to Croutes, and then on to Luzancy, where we found the 51st Regiment quartered, and then we knew that there was no La Ferté for us that night. The 51st constitute the extreme infantry advance, and whenever one saw it one might be sure there is nothing further but a handful of horsemen. Luzancy, a very little place, was full to repletion. We returned, therefore, to Croutes, and found as much crowding there; so, instead of retracing our steps to Nogent, we crossed the Marne and made for the railway station of Nanteuil-Saacy, which we saw opposite with a couple of houses beside it. One of the houses was deserted and stripped.

In the other we found a man and his wife, but the lady was doing her duty by her country in this its hour of need by adding a unit to its population. In these circumstances we took up our quarters in the waiting-room of the station, sleeping on the seats, and lighting our fire to boil our coffee-water with a basketful of used tickets. Next morning we came on to La Ferté in advance of head-quarters.

The white fog so characteristic of the Marne valley was still hanging over the pretty town of La Ferté, when, about half-past four in the morning of Wednesday the 14th, we drove over the quaint old bridge on our road forward to Meaux. All round lay the 6th Army Corps, the honest fellows still slumbering soundly in the semi-darkness. As we drove forward through the fog, there were but few signs of our having been preceded by any large body of men. As day broke, the soft roadsides showed tokens of having been trodden by cavalry, and the hoof-prints had not been beaten out, as they invariably were, when infantry men had come tramping after the horsemen. Seven miles beyond La Ferté, still in the thick fog, we reached the village of Trilport, about three miles from Meaux, and here were a few men of the 51st, and a slender guard in front of the Mairie. The sentry shouted something unintelligible as we passed him—it was not "Halt!" and so we did not care to pull up. But when we had traversed quite half the fine

bridge which forms a continuation of the little town, a "Halt!" in loud and peremptory tones, came from a dim figure half obscured by the fog. It came again still sharper and louder as we continued to advance, our horse having a good deal of way on him. Then the figure stretched out an arm, and, snatching the bridle, sent the animal back on his haunches, shouting as he did so, "Donnerwetter! can't you see the bridge is down?" Down it certainly was, and very near down were we, too, in the fog. The arch nearest Meaux, one of considerable span, had been utterly shattered by gunpowder, and the débris lay in the water, creating quite a tempestuous little rapid. As we were thanking and questioning the sentry, a gust of wind suddenly swept the fog away, and there became visible, two hundred yards or so up stream, the wreck of the fine railway bridge, all three arches of which had been blown up. Gaunt and grim stood the shattered arches in the sombre light of the morning, contrasting strangely in the sullen ruin of their appearance with the busy scene in the intervening space. The pioneers of the 6th Corps were just finishing a bridge which they had hastily improvised. A pontoon train was hourly expected, but meanwhile the pioneers with their axes had constructed a very creditable pile bridge. Now they were causewaying the approaches to the timber platform with grassy sods sliced from the bank. It was good to see the system and purpose with which every-

one worked. An officer stood by formally to superintend operations, but he seldom needed to take the cigar from his mouth to utter an order. The division of labour principle was carried out to its fullest extent, and the result was speed, order, and efficiency. As a special favour, this gentleman permitted our carriage to cross before the bridge was quite finished, and in advance of a battery of artillery, the horses of which were champing their bits with impatience at the halt in the chill morning air.

The broken bridges on the Marne, at Trilport, were not the only obstacles which the French engineers had attempted to interpose between the Germans and Meaux. There was the tunnel at Nanteuil, a really serious impediment. Had all the French operations on this line been as thorough as this, the German advance would have been materially delayed. But in other cases the engineers must either have been consummately stupid or have built largely on a supposititious stupidity on the part of the Germans. When they destroyed the bridges in the direct line, they invariably left standing some convenient substitute capable of being utilised by the easy expedient of going a few hundred yards either right or left. Thus a mile beyond the Trilport ruin a bridge on the canal had also been destroyed. But a wily Uhlan had ridden down the towing-path till he came to a handy if rather narrow wooden structure, about half a mile to

the left, and then come back on to the chaussée, and chalked on a convenient post the laconic but intelligible word "Links." "Links" (left) we went accordingly, crossed the canal, and reached the outskirts of Meaux, where there was another bridge down. This time the direction was "Rechts," and obedience to it soon brought us into the town, where there were nothing as yet but a regiment of hussars and a few sergeants that had come on in advance to take up quarters in the town and the neighbouring villages for the troops. In the course of the afternoon the greater part of the 6th Army Corps arrived in the neighbourhood of Meaux; comparatively few men, however, being quartered in the town itself, in anticipation of the accommodation requisite for Royal head-quarters, which were expected from Château Thierry next day. General von Tümpling had his head-quarters at Quincy Segy, a little village with a beautiful château, about six kilometres to the south of Meaux, but divided from it by a more serious obstacle than the trivial distance, in the shape of a destroyed bridge on a branch of the canal. A Jäger regiment formed the infantry fore-posts in a line of villages, the centre of which was Claye, about five miles to the front; and the 8th and 9th Regiments of hussars were on patrol and vedette duty out to the front of the Jägers. They had pushed reconnaissances as near to Paris as the village of Gagny, close under Fort Nogent, and their report was that there was

no French force outside the ring of forts. But there had been a few trifling skirmishes between detachments of French cavalry covering the engineers in their work of destruction, and the German patrols. Two or three German dragoons had been shot and a few French prisoners taken. And the 5th Army Corps' advance guard lay around Coulommiers, considerably to the left rear. To the north, and also rather in the rear, was the bulk of the Maas army, but its cavalry were reported to have pushed patrols on the north-west, close up to Gonesse and Montmorency.

On the morning of the 16th, while riding out to the cavalry foreposts in company with a hussar officer, we suddenly came, on the great road in front of Claye, on a little posse of French lancers, following a civilian who carried a white flag. On the top of a little knoll the lancers halted, and then retreated, leaving the "parlementaire" to come forward alone. When he came within hail, it turned out that he was the Second Secretary of the British Legation in Paris, and the bearer of a communication from Lord Lyons to Count Bismarck. He got a mount from one of the hussars, who vacated his saddle for the purpose, and was escorted into the camp by a sergeant and a couple of men. Great interest was naturally excited among the German troops when the news spread of the advent of a "parlementaire." A report had been current a couple of days before that the

defence of Paris was abandoned, and although that had been contradicted, a wide-spread belief existed that the Parisians were not prepared when confronted with the actual realities of a siege, to let the matter go to extremities. The arrival of the English secretary was accepted as in support of this view, and everybody was anxious for the King and Bismarck to come on toward the front. The Royal head-quarters arrived early in the afternoon of the same day, and I learned, however, in the course of the evening, from a reliable source, that Mr. Malet was the bearer of a communication emanating, in the first instance, from Lord Granville, having for its object that proposal relative to mediation which led to the historical interviews at Ferrières, which Jules Favre terminated by futile gasconade.

Mr. Malet was courteous enough to give a few details regarding the condition of Paris, and the incidents of his journey from the capital to the German foreposts. He described Paris as being in a seething and excited condition, with divided councils, and a huge mass of pseudo-soldiery, the individual bravery of each individual component part of which might be unquestionable, but the general discipline of which was so loose and flaccid as almost to disentitle, in his opinion, the body of semi-armed men to the appellation of soldiers. He had spent a night on his road, and the Gardes Mobiles where he halted had made the cheerful suggestion that he should sleep "under

the beautiful stars." Mr. Malet, reserving the question whether he would have any objection to sleep "under the beautiful stars," if they were visible, pointed out the fact that they were not, and requested other sleeping accommodation than that afforded by the earth as a mattress and the sky as a canopy. This he ultimately obtained, his escort sleeping in the adjoining shed. He saw evidences of the most flagrant disregard of discipline on the part of the troops lying outside the defences of Paris. The men coolly refused to get up and take their turn of duty on guard when ordered to do so by their officers, although, to judge from appearances, there would have been no hesitation had the order been to get up and go into action. It says not a little for Trochu that he could have constructed a measurably serviceable army out of materials so unpromising.

Mr. Malet returned towards Paris next morning, leaving in the same way as he had come, under an escort of German hussars. Those who knew the nature of the risk he ran felt considerable apprehension for his safety. In the course of the morning the French had fired upon two flags of truce, and it was just a chance if Mr. Malet should be recognized. However, he got among the defenders of Paris without detriment, and, as we afterwards learnt, reached the British Embassy—there was yet a British Embassy in Paris—in safety.

PART II.

METZ.

CHAPTER I.

THE SIEGE.

Instructions caused me at this juncture to quit the advance upon Paris, and I left Meaux on the morning of the 17th September. It may not be altogether devoid of interest to recall the position of the German armies on that day so far as accorded with my knowledge. The troops had hourly been pouring to the front since first the 6th Army Corps crossed the pile-bridge at Trilport. The object, it was already known, was completely to invest the capital. The 5th Army Corps, with the head-quarters of the Crown Prince, striking south from Coulommiers, was pushing on through the villages to Chaulmes, and thence to Brie, on its road to cross the Seine at Villeneuve St. George; the pontoon train was in front between the field artillery and the infantry. The 5th might have marched faster, but that it had to tarry till the 2nd Bavarian Army Corps (still on the road from La Ferté) should have got up with it, taking the more circuitous route through the villages of Montceaux, Vanteuil, Boutigny, and so on to the great Melun

road at Segy. The 5th and the Bavarians were then to push forward round in the direction of Versailles; the interval between their right and the Marne to be occupied by the 6th Army Corps. The destruction of the bridge over the Marne at Lagny had occasioned some temporary inconvenience, but this had already been remedied by the erection of a pontoon. The artillery of the 6th Army Corps had all gone to the south front. General Vinoy, with a field army, mostly consisting of regular troops, was reported by the Uhlans to be outside the cordon of forts on the south of Paris; and it seemed as if the 3rd Army might have to fight for its passage across the Seine. The Saxons were in force at Dammartin, touching our right, while the 4th Army Corps, the right wing of the Maas Army, was feeling round the north side of Paris. The King was expected to move forward in a few days, and occupy the château of Ferrières.

The bridges over the canals as I drove back to La Ferté on my return journey had already been repaired, but the Marne was still crossed by the pile bridge, although there was an alternative pontoon lower down the stream. Some little distance on the Meaux side of La Ferté I encountered the advance of the 2nd Bavarian Corps, and I had to strike off to the right on the road to Montmirail, till I came to a cross road, which brought me down again into the valley of the Seine upon Nogent, right into the rear of the Bavarians. There were no troops on this

road, but it had been extensively traversed during the few preceding days, and the people were only just beginning to return to their homes. The villagers were very timid, and, I may add, very hungry, all along it, but it was wonderful how little damage the Germans had done during their transit. The poultry still strutted about the road through the village, and there was hardly a broken pane of glass to be seen. Furniture and valuables the people had secreted before the troops had come upon them, and the chief injury seemed to have been sustained by the straw stacks, upon which the men had drawn freely to make beds wherewithal in the empty houses. Over Nogent the wave had passed a little earlier, and the place had proportionately recovered more. Meat, both beef and mutton, was hanging in the open butcher's shop. All the way to Château Thierry was visible the eager desire of the peasantry and farmers to overtake temporarily arrested agricultural labour. Except for the occasional traces of a bivouac and now and then a broken down vine stem, there was no evidence that a vast army had so recently traversed this road. The children played around the doors beside the old crones at their knitting, the men and women were in the fields working with a clumsy assiduity, and it seemed to me not uncheerfully. The vine-pickers were in the vineyards, filling their creels with the great clusters of somewhat over-ripe grapes; but their

number was, no doubt, smaller than had peace reigned in the land. There were cattle in the pastures and horses at the plough and between the shafts of the carts. I do not think any one not aware of the fact could have gathered from outward appearance that anything of exceptional importance had recently occurred in the beautiful and smiling valley. In Château Thierry were a handful of Bavarian bullock drivers and a few footsore infantrymen. The people of this beautiful town had never forsook it in numbers so great as had the inhabitants of some other places; nor had they any reason to repent of their courage. Now it seemed as if they had fallen again into the somnolent routine of a provincial town. The burghers gossiped on the pavement, the young ladies promenaded in the avenues of noble trees, the lads squatted on the brink of the Marne, angling with a lazy pertinacity. The Hôtel de l'Eléphant was empty, changed indeed from that Elephant which I had seen a few days before, when Von Tümpling's staff were buzzing the bottles in the *salle à manger*, and the cook was in a white heat at the multiplicity of orders. The landlord, a gentleman himself of the elephantine pattern, confided to me, with a sage wag of the head, that he would be heartily glad to see *Messieurs les Prussiens* come back to stop as long as they could make it convenient, for they were the best customers he had ever had, never grumbled, and invariably rejected red wine for cham-

pagne, for which they paid promptly the price demanded.

At Dormans were a considerable number of Germans, but no regular force—only sick and convalescents, and stragglers, chiefly belonging to the 63rd Regiment. Neither here did I find any misery. The disconsolateness of Madame at the hotel only proceeded from the circumstance that she had a son in MacMahon's Chasseurs de France, of whose fate at Sedan she knew nothing. The shops were all open, and the show in the windows was by no means despicable. Next morning, in and about Ville en Tardenoise, I met and passed the whole of the 11th Army Corps on its march to the front. The men looked fresh and well, and the horses in capital condition; but the ranks were considerably thinner than before that terrible struggle on to the plateau above Floing. Rheims was occupied by a division of Bavarians and another of Würtemburgers. Although this town had been in a state of remarkable ferment on the occasion of the first entry of the Germans, it had got used to the situation in a very short time, and now it looked as if the German occupation was a thing from time immemorial. It was Sunday, and citizens and Bavarians were streaming out of the noble old cathedral and the various churches of the city in all the apparent friendliness of fellow-worshippers. Among the poorer classes in Rheims there had been considerable hardship, owing to the dear-

ness of provisions and the obligation incumbent on them of providing food for the soldiers billeted on them. The German authorities had, however, averted further distress from this source, by establishing a commissariat for troops billeted on all those unable to support them.

Although the route between Rethel and Sedan had been traversed by a large portion of the German host on its south-western march after Sedan, the district, at least as far as Boulzicourt, seemed to have either suffered very little, or to have recuperated with surprising alacrity. As in the valley of the Marne, field operations were going on briskly. Agricultural horses seemed plentiful, and I saw several great herds of cattle in the flat water meadows. I felt a deep interest in the portion of road between Flize and Sedan. I had traversed it several times before—once on the day of the battle of Sedan, when a few scared old women, sitting crouching by their black hearths amidst the crashing of the cannonading, and an occasional scanty group of timid-eyed men peeping out from behind the stone dykes, were the only evidences of resident population in villages that bore the red-fresh impress of the fangs of the war-dog.

The people were gradually coming back to Flize, Dom de Mesnil, and Fernois, the three villages between Boulzicourt and Sedan. In Flize it seemed that there must be plenty of wine, as well as plenty to drink it, for the auberge was crammed with the blue blouses. The

females of the families had fallen into the old familiar way of sitting knitting in the sunshine outside their doors. But many houses were still closed up, and here and there the blackened skeleton of a roofless house, a grim memorial of the hot shell-fire. Over against Donchery the peasants were fishing the dead horses out of the Meuse, and burying them in great holes. It is impossible to describe the emotions which almost every step of this road called up in my mind—associated as it was with events fixed so indelibly in my memory. Here was the little house at which I had seen Napoleon alight from his carriage on the morning of the 2nd September. A child was playing on the spot where the Emperor and Bismarck sat in that earnest colloquy of theirs which I watched so intently. A woman was spreading clothes on the path in the potato plot, up and down which I had seen the ruined man moodily pacing as he tugged his dishevelled moustache, after Bismarck had drawn the white cap with the yellow band down over his eyes, and posted off to take counsel with his master. To the left was the ruined railway bridge over the Meuse. In my immediate front was the Château Bellevue, before which I had seen the perturbed meeting of the monarchs—Napoleon bowing low to hide the workings of his face; Wilhelm studying not to hide his emotion. Away across the low alluvial plain and the sweep of the river, that ghastly schlacht-feld sloped upward from the low bluffs,

—now brown and bare, but, when I saw it once before, a fearful space in which surged to and fro, in the gaps of the white smoke, the heaving masses of maddened combatants—when I saw it yet again a ghastly expanse of death, here chequered with dead grey horses and gay-clad dead riders, there flecked with the more sombre uniforms of the German soldiers lying thick where the mitrailleuse hail had beaten them to the earth. Below it was the island, with the château in its centre, on to which I had seen the ceaseless stream of French prisoners pouring on the 3rd—the once-gay gardens of the château now bare, and the trees stripped of their foliage. And farther to my right lay Sedan itself, with the German landwehr sentry on its ramparts; and farther to the right, Bazeilles of ghastly memory.

The scene had changed since last I looked upon it. As I drove down the gentle slope into Sedan I met the townspeople, male and female, the Cook's tourists, and the relic-hunting riff-raff of Belgium, sauntering in dilettante fashion along the road, which three weeks ago had a ghastly fringe of corpses. The relic-hunters were picking up the knapsacks out of the ditch, and stealing the sword bayonets that had been set up in lieu of tombstones. In the open space between the enceinte and the minor fortifications stood the captured French artillery—five long straight rows of cannons, seventy-five in each row, besides numerous mitrailleuses and tumbrils. A

single sentry did duty over the vast park. In the moats, German soldiers were punting, and from the bridges they were bobbing for weapons of war hidden by the water, occasionally bringing to the surface the bloated corpses of those who had erstwhile wielded these same weapons. All the shops in the town were open, and business seemed tolerably brisk. That the spirit of enterprise was not wholly dead was evinced by huge posters announcing "an immense consignment of cigars," and every *Débit de tabac* was doing a roaring trade. The convalescent wounded, with pallid faces and thin limbs, were placidly sunning themselves on the steps of the public buildings or tottering feebly about the streets. One young sous-officer interested me greatly. The reader may have seen the matrix of a branch covered by a round plaster of clay to prevent the canker from getting into the heart of the tree. This quiet, pale-faced lad had lost his left arm at the shoulder. It seemed to me that the shoulder itself had been taken out close to the collar-bone, and the bandages stood out just like the clay bole to which I have referred. He must have made a very quick recovery to be able to walk about not three weeks after a capital operation of this nature.

The siege of Metz, to watch which was my new duty, had virtually begun on that woeful day for the French arms when the ravine of Gravelotte was stormed, and Bazaine, baulked in his last desperate effort to keep hold

of any of the main roads leading Parisward from Metz, was hurled back under the guns of Fort St. Quentin. On the day after Gravelotte, the soldiers of Prince Frederick Charles and Steinmetz had begun, in the prompt and thorough German manner, to girdle the environs of Metz with a series of defensive earthworks, linked together by a continuous cincture of entrenchment, so well contrived and so formidable as to reduce to a minimum the apparent discrepancy in strength between a vast army free to make its concentrations on any selected point, and a host more numerous, indeed, but necessarily attenuated as regarded any one point by reason of the immensity of the circle around the radius-border of which it had to show an unbroken front. That there was a time, during which Bazaine could have hewed his way through this girdle, if he had commenced his effort with discretion, and prosecuted it with daring energy and regardlessness of loss, it does not appear that in the nature of things there can be any reasonable doubt. What effect his emancipation would have produced, had it been effected soon after Gravelotte, is a question involving considerations so various that, in such a work as this, I may be excused referring to them in detail. But it is obvious that had Bazaine been a leader of originality, self-reliance, promptness, and boldness, instead of, as I estimate him, an honest, rather sluggish man, thankful to get his initiative from some one else, instead of ready

to take his own initiative—a military formalist mainly, distracted between his political and his military obligations, and utterly unversed in the rare art of regalvanising beaten troops,—had Bazaine been another sort of man, he might surely have seriously complicated von Moltke's strategy.* Suppose that he had cut his way out in the obviously most eligible direction, somewhere between Plappeville and Maizières les Metz, and marched at the pace of the first Napoleon on the track of the Maas army. The Germans can march, but they cannot fly; the hot energy of the Red Prince could not have accomplished the impossibility of drawing in from the fringe of the wide circle an army strong enough to give Bazaine battle before he had won the start by several marches. It was the Maas army which met MacMahon in the teeth at Buzancy and Nouart as he came lumbering through the Argonne into the Maas valley; the third army had swung round, not in time to head him, but to take him on the right flank, extended in dishevelled march all along the valley. But if Bazaine had been close on the track of the Crown Prince of Saxony, the latter would have been in a vice. He could not have fought facing both ways. Had he elected to arrest MacMahon, Bazaine would have been upon him from be-

* I give no heed to the balderdash written about Bazaine's abandonment to sensual indulgence, of which I have been unable to find a scintilla of unprejudiced and impartial confirmation.

hind; had he faced about and met Bazaine, the cannon of MacMahon would have been roaring on his new rear. His position, in fact, would have been untenable; and it seems plain that the only course open to him would have been to slip out of the *crux* to the southward, and thus to have allowed the coalescence of the army of Châlons and the army from Metz. The outcome of a junction so formidable it would be folly to attempt to define. The French situation would still have been precarious—perhaps nearly as bad as it was the day before Sedan. For on three sides three German armies would still have hemmed it in, and there was nothing behind it but the frontier. On the other hand, there would surely have been much possible to an army of 300,000 men, supposing the troops in good fighting heart, and the generals worth the skin of an orange.

But Bazaine lay supine behind his forts till he got his initiative in the shape of the plan to co-operate with MacMahon. It seems clear that the planners of that general's disastrous expedition contemplated that his march would be bloodless till he should have reached the north-western flank of the army environing Metz. Letters from Metz, intercepted by the besiegers, bore testimony to the fact that MacMahon was expected to make his appearance in that vicinity about the 30th of August. The signal for the Metz army was to have been three bombs fired in the air by MacMahon, and then a sortie was to be

made at the same moment that the army of Châlons was to fall on the German rear. It is actually the case that Bazaine was cautioned against allowing the guns of the fortress to have too much elevation when fired in support of the sortie, to obviate the risk of the projectiles falling in the co-operating army on the further side of the Germans. But MacMahon had other fish to fry, and the three rockets never flashed into Metz the signal for co-operative action; so on the 31st, in blind bewilderment, Bazaine made his first great sortie, and made it in the direction in which success would have been most difficult to compass—in the direction of the north-east, the church spire of St. Barbe being seemingly his landmark. Apart from the actual difficulties to be encountered on unfavourable ground and against exceptionally strong opposing works, the selection of this direction for such a sortie seems simply inexplicable, unless Bazaine contemplated, not a junction with MacMahon, but a bold push into the Rhine provinces—a conception no admirer has ever dreamt of attributing to him. MacMahon was expected from the north-west. Bazaine, had he cut through on the north-east, would have had to march to the junction round a third of the circumference of the compass, giving time for a German concentration in the path of his circuitous march. But he failed to break out: it may have been for want of persistency, a faculty in which he seems to have been weak; it may have been that he re-

cognised what the Germans contend was recognisable, that the longer he tried the worse he would fail; and after this effort, while his chances of extrication diminished daily, his prospects, were he once outside, grew more and more precarious. He seems in a great measure to have accepted his fate, and solaced himself with the reflection that, at all events, he was keeping from other work the great armies which constituted his besiegers. That not a man of those might be judged superfluous, he made sorties from time to time during the month of September, not of a character suggesting an attempt to break out, but in force enough to convince the makers of his toils that the ropes by which the captive elephant was bound were not a whit too strong. No doubt, too, although I believe Bazaine to have been a perfectly honest and loyal Frenchman, he was hampered in his generalship by political considerations—of all trammels the most ruinous to daring action. The last of these partial sorties, most of which seem to have had supplies for their object, took place on the 28th of September, the day before I reached the front, and from the Germans engaged in it I gleaned some particulars respecting it.

The German foreposts occupied, in no great strength, the village of Colombey, where there are three large châteaux, in the upper stories of which there had been left by the inhabitants a considerable store of grain. They had taken refuge in Metz, and probably acquainted

the French of the existence of these stores. Anyhow, in the afternoon of the 28th the French, in large numbers, and covered by the artillery of Fort St. Julien, made a dash at Colombey, their advance followed by a number of empty waggons. For once they surprised the comparatively weak German foreposts, and drove them out of Colombey. Covering their operations by throwing forward tirailleurs into the woods to the front and towards La Planchette, they filled the waggons with the grain and started them on the return journey. But, meanwhile, the Prussian artillery had come to the front, and the shells fell thick among the Frenchmen in Colombey and the convoy on the road. The former scuttled back in great haste under the guns of St. Julien; the waggons went on at a gallop, but out of thirty-six only fourteen succeeded in getting safe off. The rest were arrested *in transitu* by the influence which the Prussian shells exercised on the animals which drew the waggons —an influence which manifested itself in limbs blown in a variety of directions. There was no great loss in killed or wounded on either side. A captain of the 44th Regiment was killed under circumstances which were a disgrace to civilized warfare. When his detachment was in retreat he fell wounded severely, but not mortally. His men placed him in shelter, and then left him as they fell back. When they recovered the village, they found the corpse of their captain mangled barbarously—his

fingers cut off for the sake of the rings he wore, and his throat cut from ear to ear. I found the Germans justly incensed at this atrocity.

The cargo which the train carried that left Saarbrück on the morning of the 29th of September, was of a sufficiently diversified character. There were country-women, with great tubs of butter, which they were taking up to the front to find a good market; officers and soldiers, new men and convalescents, both from sickness and wounds, on their way to join and re-join their regiments; Saarbrück merchants going up for orders; a few Englishmen, who nourished the idea that the fighting was chronically in progress just outside the station at Courcelles, and that, by walking a pace or two, they would be able to command a bird's-eye view of the whole affair; marketenders, who had been making investments; and a few Frenchmen on their way to the intermediate towns, who were doing their best to seem as German as possible. Our way to Forbach lay through a corner of the ground on which was fought the battle of Spicheren, and, as the train passed through the woods near Schönecken, I saw not a few graves of the men who had fallen in the fierce fight of the 6th of August. Near St. Avold we passed the débris of the train which had been shattered in a collision that brought death to several French prisoners, and at this town also we found a large depôt of military stores and provender. There was a still larger depôt at

Falquemont, where also were collected a quantity of artillery waggons captured from the French at Gravelotte. The station at Courcelles was a sight. It was a centre from which radiated in every direction long lines of waggons of every description, carrying stores of all kinds to the different army posts, north, south, east, and west. All around the deserted little village itself are great herds of cattle, piles of stores, whole pyramids of medical comforts, and long lines of sick and relay horses. The bustle was immense, and yet everything seemed orderly. There was of course an Etappen Commando in the station, but the worthy lieutenant who represented the said Etappen Commando knew nothing whatever about anything. All he could or would tell me was that Prince Frederick Charles' headquarters were at Corny, on the Moselle, to the south of Metz, but he did not know the distance. He had no waggons, no horses, very little temper, and less time to gossip. The circumstances were sufficiently unpromising. One might as well look for quartern loaves in the kennel of Fleet-street as for quarters in or around Courcelles ; and the field-post, the only and that a precarious means of getting to Corny, did not leave till three in the morning. I took the resolution of pursuing the policy out of which I often found luck eventuate, of going straight to the front till the foreposts would let me go no further. Striking northward then, and inclining westward from Courcelles, I passed in suc-

cession through the villages of Laquenexy, Marsilly, Ogy, and St. Agnan. All these I found occupied by troops, constituting the second investing line environing the fortress and town of Metz.

All the district was dotted over with the graves of the battle fought by Steinmetz on the 14th of August, and of men who had fallen in the various forepost fights. From Courcelles the scene was one of utter barrenness and desolation, wastes traversed everywhere by tracks of waggons, chequered by abandoned bivouacs, the leafy bowers of which, plastered with mud, stood forlorn and unused, all the troops having been got under cover except the foreposts who necessarily had to remain in the open. Very few of the inhabitants still remained in the district, and of these the plight was very miserable. Agricultural occupations were at a standstill; the vineyards, traversed by waggon roads and cut in two by entrenchments, were utterly ruined. The houses were wrecks, many of them wholly or partially burned by fires kindled by the shells. In Courcelles, the only living thing not German was a mongrel dog which stuck to his kennel when his owner ran away. The Germans had christened him "Courcelles," and the time-serving rogue was already more than half German—traitor that he was. In the forepost village of Montoy, which I visited the same evening, I found a considerable number of inhabitants. One old woman sat placidly before the door knitting

stockings, while the troops lined the entrenchment just in her front. I suppose she had got so used to shells and bullets that she did not mind them, or it might be that her despair had culminated in a sort of apathy of equanimity. The poor country folks and villagers around Metz were in cases so miserable that it seemed they must inevitably starve the moment that the Germans should withdraw. Though they had horses, and though the bullets had not been sweeping their farms, yet last autumn they durst not put a spade or a plough into the ground. Every field holds the "sacred and precious seed" that will germinate never till the last trumpet sounds. It is right comforting to know that good friends—Friends in more than the mere name—came to the aid of these poor wretches, with a promptness, tenderness, and efficiency characteristic of a sect that ever prefer acting to speaking. But this is anticipating. From St. Agnan I proceeded two kilometres, still in a north-westerly direction, till I reached the village of Flanville, where lay the 4th Regiment of East Prussian Infantry, forming part of the 2nd division of the 1st Army Corps. The regimental staff was comfortably located in a pleasant château, and liking the looks of the place and the friendly ways of the officers, I asked permission to attach myself for the time to the regiment, a civility which was frankly and unhesitatingly granted. I was informally taken on the strength, the good old Oberst made me free of his modest table, the

officers of No. 6 company, right hearty fellows all, assigned me six feet by four of straw in the corner of the drawing-room, in which there was not a scrap of furniture but a grand piano, on which a sequence of voluntaries, sometimes accompanied by singing, sometimes by dancing, seemed constantly going on, and everybody was anxious to show attention to the Englander who had strayed on to the foreposts. In the afternoon Lieutenant Werth, the officer in command of the 6th company (vice the Hauptmann shot on the 31st of August), accompanied me on a ride round a considerable radius of the eastern forepost circuit, and the lucidity of his explanations enabled me to arrive at what I afterwards found was a correct idea of the position, as it was in the end of September.

Next the Moselle, and eastward therefrom, the 8th Army Corps kept watch and ward, its left on Ars-sur-Moselle, its right interlacing, at the village of Magny, with the 7th Army Corps. From Magny the 7th held the line of environment lying in the village of Peltre, the château and house of Mercy-la-Haut, shattered and burnt, and on as far as Ars Laquenexy. It had foreposts and *Feldwachen* a little further forward, but not so far as they had been a few days previously, when the foreposts were at La Grange aux Bois. The left of the 1st Army Corps lay in Colombey, which was also considerably burnt, feeling the right of the 7th in Mercy-la-Haut. Its second

line extended to the northward in the villages of Ogy, Flanville, Retonfay, Château Gras, and Ste. Barbe. The first line lay in Coincy, Montoy, Noisseville, Servigny, and Failly. The whole of this latter line was within range of the big guns of the great Metz outwork of St. Julien, which occupies the summit of a mamelon. Between the first and second line there was an interval of only about a mile. To the front there lay, first, the foreposts, then the *Feldwachen*, and lastly the single sentries, within 1,500 yards of St. Julien. The first line occupied a section of the continuous entrenchment which ran right round Metz. All the villages were roughly fortified by barricades, *chevaux-de-frise*, &c.; holes had been broken through all the houses for firing, and, indeed, every village formed a very respectable, if rough and ready fortress. The foreposts lay either in single houses, also well fortified by entrenchments and barricades, or in the field behind earthworks of no inconsiderable magnitude. The *Feldwachen* chiefly occupied woods or the gardens of châteaux. A *Feldwache* which may be taken as typical, I noticed in the village of Lauvallière on the route to Saarlouis, two kilometres nearer Metz than Montoy. Here lay two companies, arms piled close at hand, and ready for a sortie from the enemy at a moment's warning. To the left, in the hamlet of la Plancette, was another *Feldwache* in a deep ravine. Here I had to dismount and walk up the slope beyond to the

knoll on which the solitary sentry kept his watch within point-blank range of a chassepot bullet from the French works at the hamlet of Belle Croix. We could see with the naked eye the Frenchmen moving about the forts of les Bottes and St. Julien, and circulating about the environs both of them and of the town, while the great eminence of Mont St. Quentin, with its mass of fortifications on the summit, shut in the scene, dominating the whole valley from the further side of the Moselle. All the front was pitted over with the craters of shells. The men of one of the regiments were erecting quite a permanent barrack of wood, the sides covered with earth, behind an isolated brewery a little way in the rear of Lauvallière. Further north, Noisseville was densely filled with German troops; Nouilly, which lies between it and St. Julien, was neutral ground, occupied by neither army, while the French were in force in Mey and Vantoux, villages still nearer the fortress. We went forward to the edge of a wood near Mey, accompanied by two Prussian patrols, and got a warning to go back in the shape of a sharp fusilade from out a garden in the environs of Mey. To complete the narrative of the localities, the environment was taken up on the right of the 1st Army Corps by the Landwehr Division, consisting of three brigades, each six battalions strong, under the command of General von Kummer. They covered at that time the ground round nearly to the Moselle on the

north, but were afterwards moved to the other side of the stream, changing places with the 10th Army Corps. The General commanding the 1st Army Corps, his Excellency von Manteuffel, lay in Ste. Barbe, a little to our north rear. Our immediate commander was General von Pritselwitz, the chief of the Second Division of the First Army Corps, who had his quarters two kilometres behind us, in the little village of Puche, where likewise was the Feldpost.

Even so early as the time of which I am writing, deserters and the German prisoners whom Bazaine had sent back, concurred in representing the condition of the troops inside and around Metz as being very bad in the matter of food. They were represented as living chiefly on horseflesh, and as having neither flour, rice, nor salt —the latter want being the subject of much complaint. The discipline of the troops was said to be good, and the morale of a character very different to that of the disorganised horde who threw down their arms at Sedan. But the German returned prisoners united in abusing the domineering greed of the French officers, who cared nothing comparatively for their men, provided their own wants were satisfied. This selfishness seems forcibly to have struck the honest Germans, used as they are to treatment so different.

It could not fail to strike even the most cursory observer that the alertness and completeness of the German fore-

post system was a great feature of the army, and one of the leading causes of its success. At night the *Feldwache* always went forward to the post occupied during the day by the farthest outlying sentry. Here it broke right and left into small picquets, leaving a strong nucleus in the centre. The front, at a distance of 200 or 300 yards, was continually traversed by cavalry patrols, who often rode right in among the sleeping Frenchmen, whose system of night vigilance was not brilliant. Then there would be a pistol shot and a round of wild chassepot firing in the dark, and the daring Uhlan would dash out through the red legs, back to his supports. Writing of chassepots, it may be noted that the German forepost troops were by this time extensively armed with these weapons to enable them to cope on equal terms with the French tirailleurs. Of the 2nd Battalion of the 4th Regiment seventy-five men were so armed, or rather seventy-five chassepots were in use and were transferred from *Feldwache* to *Feldwache,* as the changes of guard were made. This seemed to settle the question as to the relative merits of the Chassepot and the Zundnadelgewehr in the eyes of the Germans.

On the evening of September 29th it was officially made known to the troops that the French were constructing three bridges across the Moselle to the westward of Fort St. Julien, it was believed with a view to a sortie in the direction of Maison Rouge and Woippy. About

four o'clock next morning the sky became brilliantly illuminated with the shells under the fire of which they attempted to carry out their design, and with the return fire with which the German artillery met it. In the thick darkness the effect as seen from our position (about four miles away) was magnificent. Between the louder crashes of the cannon was heard the sharper rattle of the musketry fire, singly and in volleys. The firing became fainter towards six o'clock, and by seven had died away altogether—the presumption being that the French attempt had been baulked, and this we afterwards learned was the case. A few days previously the garrison of Thionville had surprised and captured a German provision train, which was carried into that fortress. The food being more needed in Metz than in Thionville, it was anticipated that an effort would be made to fight the train through the German environment into the beleaguered fortress. In all probability the affair of this morning was a diversion intended to facilitate this movement. The Germans, however, were fully alive to the contingency, and they succeeded in foiling the attempt.

I found that the Germans were in possession of detailed drawings and full particulars of the French troops lying around Metz, the correctness of which I was afterwards able to verify. Bazaine's forces—that is to say, the army driven back on Metz after the battle of Gravelotte—were not permitted to enter the town of Metz.

The whole army was encamped on the slopes of the outlying fortifications either of the town or of the outlying strongholds, in the intervening country, and in the various villages which still remained in the possession of the French. The forts were garrisoned by Mobiles and National Guards. Bazaine's head-quarters were at Ban St. Martin, outside the town, and around him lay the camp of the Imperial Guards. Opposite us on the east side lay the 3rd Army Corps of the French army—Lebœuf's corps. Its forepost nearest us was in the wood in front of Mey, and the chain extended southward to the front of the hamlet Belle Croix. The mass of the corps lay to the rear. Within the previous few days a considerable camp had been established on the slope of St. Julien, looking toward us. We could see the white tents, and the red-legged gentlemen strolling about them. Their patrols, mounted and on foot, were wont to cross our front so near that the countenances of the men could be made out with the glass. The German *Feldwachen* could have picked them off quite easily if they had chosen; but there was an order against firing at small detached parties. The French did not show the same civility. A single man could not show himself on the advance line without being blazed at by a regular volley, which seldom, however, took any effect, the firing being so wild. The guard changing was wont to be a great time for a waste of French powder and shot all

along the line, and the field guns at Little Belle Croix made a point of spitefully throwing a few shells on the brewery on the great chaussée constituting the chief forepost on our right front.

When the French made a sortie, Lieutenant Werth informed me, their scheme of advance was very characteristic. They scuttled out from the shelter of the fortresses in the loosest skirmishing order and with great rapidity till they had reached intermediate spaces sheltered from the German fire, whether by woods or by the configuration of the ground. In those they accumulated their masses, and came forward in dense columns. But they had never, save on the great sortie of the 31st of August, and at Colombey on the 28th September, succeeded in getting to close quarters with the first line of the Germans. The artillery of the latter came into play with its deadly practice, and then there was no alternative but a rapid retreat. Their demonstrations were always accompanied by a cannonade from Belle Croix and St. Julien, but seldom by the discharge of field artillery. This latter circumstance had led the Germans to the conclusion that the French were short of ammunition for their field guns, and this seemed probable, looking to the lavish use they made of them at Gravelotte. There must have been artillery of great calibre in the forts, for Lieutenant Werth pointed out to me, by Lauvallière, lying in the ditch, a huge shell, which

could not have been less than a 72-pounder. It was unexploded, a fact noticeable of a large proportion of the French shells.

The losses that had been suffered by some of the regiments of the 1st Army Corps since it had come within hail of Metz were stupendous. On the 14th August, and in the minor fights of the 30th and 31st of the same month, and those during the course of September, the 4th Regiment lost (killed and wounded) 35 officers out of a total of 60, and 1,000 men out of 3,000. The 45th Regiment, lying in its vicinity, had lost yet more of its officers. Out of 60 no fewer than 42 had fallen. The result had been that a large number of Vicefeldwebels and several sergeants had received commissions. As these were comparatively inexperienced in their new duties, they were daily receiving assiduous instructions from their seniors. These informal lectures were highly interesting—not a few officers of the British service would have greatly benefited by attending them. The troops also were drilled daily, notwithstanding their position in front of the enemy. On the morning of the 30th I watched a whole battalion at skirmishing drill, and a right pretty sight it was. The recruits that had come forward since the beginning of the war spent hours daily in perfecting their drill, and the efficiency of the whole army was sedulously maintained at the highest pitch.

I was present the same morning at the very interesting

ceremony of the distribution to the 4th Regiment of the iron crosses awarded to members of it for valour in the field. The ceremony took place at Puche, the head-quarters of the general of division, who personally distributed the crosses in the presence of the officers of the regiment. The band played the old regimental air, the "Hohenfriedberg," and the colours were on the ground. The gallant 4th had earned no fewer than twenty crosses already, and the award seemed to have been made with the most rigid impartiality, the men taking their full share of the coveted distinction with their officers. The 4th is one of the old regiments of the Prussian service, and its annals record a long and gallant career. Its regimental march, the name of which I have just mentioned, is secured to it by a special royal order in remembrance of the valour which it displayed at the battle of Hohenfriedberg, fought in 1745.

To understand the means of defence which the French army enclosed in Metz had to keep wherewithal the Germans at bay, a detailed description of the remarkable fortifications with which the virginity of La Pucelle was guarded may not be out of place. Although Metz is no longer French, these works still exist in their entirety, to say nothing of their having been strengthened, and therefore respecting them the present tense may be used.

The town of Metz, with the great Cathedral, lies for the most part on the east side of a branch of the Moselle,

which forks off from the main stream near La Grange aux Dames, and forms the islands of Chambière, and lower down of Sauley and St. Simphorien. A large suburb, however, stands on the first of these islands. The inner fortifications surround the town continuously, with the exception of one gap to the southward, which is covered efficiently by the branch of the Moselle which divides the islands of Sauley and St. Simphorien. On the north of the Ile de Chambière are two important forts on the inner line, one at the north-western angle of the enceinte, the other detached in the plain of the island, but connected with the enceinte by a covered way. On the south of the inner line are the Redoubt du Pate to the east, and the Lunette d'Arcon to the west, both connected with the enceinte by a covered way. The western side of the inner line is covered by the great Fort Moselle on the farther side of the main stream of the Moselle, a double crown work of immense strength and magnitude, inclosing great magazines and arsenals. To the south of it the bastion of Ile de Sauley sends out a long spur of fortifications, which crosses the Moselle, and terminates in a redoubt on the farther side. Nor is the eastern side of the inner line less strongly protected. In front of the enceinte looms the great double crown work of Belle Croix, to the full as large as Fort Moselle, and more highly favoured by its natural position. To the south of it stands Fort Gisors, a minor detached fortification

which serves to complete the circuit of connection with the Redoubt du Pate on the south. Thus the town of Metz is, in fact, environed by two lines of fortifications, the continuous enceinte with its bastions and what I may term the outer cordon of the inner circle having intimate connection with the enceinte.

Of themselves these defences would make the place all but impregnable, but they are by no means the most important defences of this extraordinary fortress. There is an outer circle of detached fortifications, each of which is the complement of the other, and of which no one can be assailed without the assailant laying his account to be enfiladed by at least two of the others. Let me begin with these at the Moselle, on the north of the town at La Grange aux Dames, and work round, proceeding first in an easterly direction. After climbing the bank of the stream we come to the chaussée leading to Bouzonville, and crossing it we almost immediately come on the great glacis of Fort St. Julien. This is an outlying fort of the first magnitude, covering the whole of the round summit of a natural eminence, and having on three sides a natural glacis, therefore of great extent. It lies about two English miles from Metz, in a north-easterly direction; and a little to the north-east of it is the Monastery and wood of Grimont, the former of which Bazaine's engineers had scientifically diverted from ecclesiastical to military purposes. About a mile and a half due south o.

St. Julien, and about a mile due east from Fort Belle Croix, is Fort les Bottes, a great hog-backed structure chiefly of earth, which was thrown up as a precautionary measure, either immediately before or immediately after the outbreak of the war. The Germans, I believe, are engaged in altering it from a "provisional" to a temporary fort. Its position is very important as a link between St. Julien and Fort Queleu on the south. It stands a little to the south of the great chaussée from Metz to Saarlouis and Saarbrück, while as yet the bisection has not taken place. Forward about a mile from les Bottes, and on the chaussée just before it bisects, is a hamlet named Belle-Croix, which must not, however, be confounded with the fort of the same name. Here, also, the French had strong earthworks mounted with guns, but these, for the most part at least, were field artillery, and paucity of ammunition kept them tolerably quiet. About a mile and a half south of Fort les Bottes, and about the same distance from Metz, is Fort Queleu, also an important structure, dominating the main road to Strasburg and the adjoining flat country as far as the telegraph on the elevated ground before Mercy-le-Haut. Turning now westward, and inclining to the south, we come to Fort St. Privat, at a distance of about two and a half miles both from Fort Queleu and Metz. Its value consists in the command it has of the eastern side of the valley of the Moselle, of the road from Nancy,

and of the railway lines which converge behind it. Leaving it, we come to the Moselle again, this time on the south-west side of the town, and striking up nearly due north, we have nothing in the shape of permanent fortifications, although during the siege there were several temporary batteries, till we climb the great hump, on the top of which stands Fort St. Quentin, the greatest outwork of Metz. St. Quentin is a complete fortress in itself; it could hold out were all its neighbours taken, and it may safely be termed impregnable, looking at the combined strength of its natural position and its skilfully devised fortifications. Not only does it dominate the country to the south, south-west, west, and north-west, but it frowns outward to the east, and its great guns would play an important part in the defence against an attack on the inner fortifications of Metz. North-west of it, about a mile on the top of the bluffs, lies Fort Plappeville, or les Carrières, the natural position of which is not so strong as that of St. Quentin, because the elevation on which it stands is not isolated, while it is open in the rear, and therefore requires St. Quentin as the complement of its defence, a defect the Germans are remedying. It acts as a defence over a great tract of country to the west, and keeps a besieging force at a respectful distance, so that it cannot reach the edge of the bluffs and pitch projectiles down into Metz. Due north from Metz, about two miles, and standing in the middle of the plain, bounded by the

Thionville Railway on the west, and the Moselle on the east, lies the improvised work of St. Eloy, the last and not the least important of the outworks of Metz. Its province is in combination with St. Julien to take care of the valley of the Moselle to the northward, and to dominate the great road to Thionville. All these fortifications (except the little Belle-Croix) were furnished with heavy guns of position, and the French had no lack of ammunition for the use of those great fortress guns, although field artillery ammunition might have been short. Besides their field artillery, the Germans had two or three batteries of siege 12-pounders on the western side of the Moselle, and I am not aware that during the siege they had either any more numerous or more formidable siege artillery on the ground. Their quiescently defensive, or rather obstructive, position, then, was dictated by sound military conditions, since a blockade answered exactly the purpose they had in view, viz., to reduce the place by famine.

None of the villages around Metz are very large, and Flanville is one of the smallest of them—consisting of a few hovels huddled by the side of a country road, under the lee of two large châteaux. Small as it was, it had to accommodate the whole of a battalion of the 4th. The men were packed closely in the houses, occupying lofts, passages, sheds, and every other available shred of cover. The officers

occupied the two châteaux, both of which had been beautiful residences before war had laid them waste. The colonel's château still had its garden undestroyed —in this autumn time a paradise of sweet-scented flowers, with here a fountain, and there a leafy bower. Our château had sustained harder fortune. A company of men, as well as a number of officers occupied its spacious chambers ; on the lawn outside were stacked the needle-guns, ready for immediate use, and the flower-beds had been trodden down almost beyond the power of recognition. A Corporalschaft occupied the conservatory, and the flower-garden was a drill ground. The château had been pelted by the French in the battle of the 1st of September—it was still inside the range of their guns—and the roof had been shattered by shells. We occupied the drawing-room, in which were two great mirrors reaching to the roof. The one over the mantelpiece had been penetrated by a bullet exactly in the centre, and fantastically starred in all directions. Here is a sketch written on the spot, of the manner of our daily life, when the gentlemen over the way did not happen to be bellicose.

"In the grey morning, unless we have been previously roused by firing on the front, the soldier servants come into our drawing-room bedroom, bringing the morning coffee. Long before, the soldiers on the other side of the partition have been stirring, and they are the merriest,

the most noisy set of Kerle imaginable. After coffee, drill begins. The young soldiers are at the goose-step in the flower-garden; the older hands practising skirmishing by companies in the neighbouring vineyards. At nine comes appel—a kind of parade without arms, at which the clothes and accoutrements of the men are carefully inspected. The appel only takes place occasionally, but the under officers have a minor appel every day, at each of which in turn there is an inspection of a separate article. Now it is arms, now boots, now cloaks—the under officer is responsible for the condition of his Schaft or squad, and he takes care he shall not incur a reprimand through any want of vigilance. After appel the officers breakfast. The feeding is homely, and eaten in a homely fashion—clean plates, or plates of any kind, not being plentiful, and the glass-ware decidedly deficient. But there never wants a hearty appetite; and for a guest like myself, a hearty welcome and a frank kindliness that I never can forget. Breakfast over, comes an interval of visiting, gossiping, and beer drinking, for we have our own marketender on the lawn, and Saarbrück is only forty miles away. Some write, some read, others sleep; it is astonishing how much sleep it takes to tire some people. The men employ themselves in tailoring, in seeing to the rations, in conducting the cooking of the dinner, and in smoking in the bright sunshine. Dinner is rather a discursive meal; you imagine you have

finished it when you have eaten of the rice, the soup, and the mincemeat in your own particular room, but going the round you find another mess devoting their attention to plums and schinken, and you join in of course. Then you go a little farther, and find the inmates of another room topping off with chocolate or coffee and a *petit verre*. Of course you are asked to partake, and equally of course you do so. After dinner is the siesta. The quarters are then as quiet as in the dead of night. In an hour or two a sprightly officer awakens, and assiduously devotes himself to the stirring up of his more drowsy brother officers. A pack of cards comes to the surface somehow, and presently the round table is surrounded by a circle of card-players, the game proceeding with a considerable amount of noise, owing to a habit most Germans have of all speaking at once, each at the top of his voice. Those who are not at the card-table stroll out to visit the brother officer who is on the *repli*, drop in upon the worthy major and colonel, whom they find placidly smoking in their beautiful garden, or watch Fort St. Julien and the French tents through their glasses. Deep as the interest may be in the game which is being played at the card-table, that and all other local interest fades into nothing at the appearance of the Underofficer who has been over to head-quarters to the Feldpost. It is good to watch the countenances as the letters, hurriedly opened, are being pored over with eager faces. The eyes

of the portly Dantzic premier-lieutenant on the sofa become strangely moist as the crumpled fuchsia and rose-bud drop out of his letter, the fragrance still clinging about them as when they had been placed there as a love token from the children he has left at home. What is that which the handsome young lieutenant hurriedly clutches as it falls out of the envelope, and pushes inside his tunic on the side next his heart? I don't think it is a bill from his tailor. He would not smile so if it were a dunning letter he was reading, and the most gushing man is not addicted to the practice of stealthily kissing a letter from his tailor ere he consigns it to his breast-pocket. Depend upon it the lieutenant is happy in the knowledge that the girl of his heart, far away on the shores of the Baltic, has not forgotten him. The domestic side of the German character comes out very strong in this interval of letter-reading. Nearly all the officers of the 4th are from the same district, and the letter of one officer commonly contains messages to others who at home are friends and neighbours. I was amused to-day by the amazed delight of a grizzled officer who must have seen close on fifty years, when he looked at the superscription of one of his letters. '*Gott in Himmel!* it's from the old mother,' he cried. Then came quite a gush of interest as to the age of the old lady, and when he told us with some pride that she was close on ninety, the 'Donnerwetters' were many and hearty.

After the letters come the perusal of the newspapers and gossiping as to their contents, and the probable designs of Bismarck—it is always Bismarck who is named. When darkness falls we have music and dancing. One of our volunteers is a brilliant instrumentalist, and he comes down from his lofty abode near the roof, and plays our piano in the drawing-room. Now it is 'Die Wacht am Rhein,' the officers chiming in with the words, and the men on the farther side of the partition and out in the environs taking up the strain, till the volume of sound must sweep over the glades and the ruined vineyards to the French field watches outside Belle-Croix and St. Julien. Now it is a waltz which the young volunteer plays, and then the spectacle would greatly delight Mr. Spurgeon, who is an advocate for male dancing with male. A nimble young officer, who, if he were not a gallant fellow with medals on his breast, would have made a capital dancing-master, treats us to a burlesque rendering of the cancan, and the music gets into the head of a rotund officer of middle-age, who executes the most fantastic capers with a suppleness, and at the same time a gravity, that sets everybody in a roar. He infects the rest, and for the time one might imagine he was in the company of a congregation of dancing dervishes. But we must not keep the men awake, and, in truth, nobody cares to be a late sitter himself. By ten o'clock we are all in bed, the whole place wrapped in

slumber, save the sentries who surround us with a cordon through which a mouse could not creep. No more could a mouse creep into or out of Metz. The sentries' orders are precise to allow nobody to pass through after nightfall on any pretext whatever. Last night an officer and myself, who had been out on the foreposts, allowed darkness to overtake us before our return. As we approached the chain of sentries, the stern 'halt' came to us through the darkness. 'Officer,' was the reply, but it availed nothing—notwithstanding that the sentry belonged to the officer's own regiment. We had to stand till a party came to conduct us to the guard, and then the officer went back and praised the sentry for the creditable manner in which he had done his duty."

After dark on the night of the 1st October the 4th Regiment marched forward into the first line, occupying the village of Noisseville, a position sufficiently far advanced to make its occupation very ticklish work. The village was within easy range of the shell fire, either from St. Julien or Fort les Bottes, while the field guns at the little Belle-Croix were, so to speak, just over the way. The village constituted part and parcel of the line of the German entrenchments; every cottage was a stronghold; in every street, alley, and gap was an earthwork. About 300 yards to our right front, in the bottom of a rather abrupt valley was the village of Nouilly, belonging to neither side. Just outside of it, on

the French side, and to the north-west, begins the Bois de Mey, on the southern edge of which lies the village of the same name, occupied by the French. The wood swarmed with their tirailleurs; we could see their red breeches through the trees, and they also acquainted us with their presence by firing occasionally at our patrols when they imagined they came too near the wood.

At night I went on the farthest *Feldwache* on our front, just behind the village of Nouilly, and remained there during the night with the lieutenant in command. As soon as he relieved his predecessors, he threw forward a sergeant's party into Nouilly, with orders to hold it till daylight. About one o'clock in the morning our cavalry patrols, supported by an infantry detachment, felt their way to the edge of the Bois de Mey, and there encountered a fierce but wild discharge of musketry. They fell back on the sergeant's party at Nouilly, who held the place till they could discern the advance of large detachments of French troops. The shots had stirred up the three battalions lying in and around Mey, and they had come out on the rampage to annihilate the patrols and whatever else should come in their way. The German sergeant in Nouilly, however, quietly fell back on his supporting *Feldwache*, where the lieutenant stood fast till he could see the Frenchmen swarming into Nouilly, and then we fell back on the *repli*, which in turn supported the *Feldwache*. It did one good to see the coolness of the

officer, a young lieutenant, not to all appearance over twenty-five, but who wore the '66 medal. I asked him why, looking at the seeming strength of the approaching force, he did not give a general alarm. The apparatus for this purpose was complete. A fusee thrown into the bonfire on the edge of the *repli* post would have got 40,000 men under arms in ten minutes, and the artillery galloping to the front in a quarter of an hour. But it was exactly the responsibility of such a general disturbance that prevented him from crying "Wolf"—although, to my judgment, there seemed cause enough. The event proved how wisely Lieutenant von Verzin had learned to calculate contingencies. The French were content temporarily to occupy Nouilly, and after a brief stay fell back on their original position at Mey. But if he refrained from giving the alarm, he did not allow a single precaution to escape him. His company was extended in skirmishing order on both sides of the post, ready to retard the French advance should it have taken place. As it was, a great number of shots were exchanged, but no harm was done on either side.

Around the church of Noisseville there was a *repli* post, continually occupied by a company. The church itself, by the way, is, or rather I fear I must say was, a very interesting structure. Of great age and considerable architectural pretensions, it had been pounded with shells more severely than any building I have ever seen. The

French had pelted it on one side, the Germans on the other. The steeple had been originally square, now it was roughly round; there were great gaps in the walls and holes in the roof, and the birds were singing merrily in the half ruined structure. The *curé* had remained by his church, and, strange to say, his residence had escaped with very little damage. The colonel of the 4th was his guest, or rather he was the colonel's guest, for he had nothing to eat but what was purveyed by our worthy *Oberst*. The good *curé* spoke German fluently, and got a kindly salute from everybody; he took the firing very coolly, and seemed in remarkably good spirits, all things considered. But to return to the *repli* round the shattered church. The 6th Company found it on the 2nd, and I found my way into Lieutenant Werth's shanty after coming back from the *Feldwache* in the grey dawn. Till about one o'clock all was quiet—the men lay about on the straw, smoking or sleeping, and the cavalry videttes, 100 yards to our front, circled leisurely. Suddenly there came a spattering chassepot fire from the riflemen on the little Belle Croix directed against an infantry party which was beating the foreground. The bullets came whistling over the *repli* post as Lieutenant Werth and myself jumped up to see what was the matter. One hit the ground a little to our front, ricochetted between us, and lodged in the arm of a soldier who was lying down a little in our rear. The order was for all to get under

cover immediately, but Werth had some difficulty in getting obeyed, so eager were his fellows to see what was going on. He himself stood coolly exposed as the bullets came whistling by, minding them no more than if they had been so many buzzing flies. Firing with the French is infectious, and it was taken up all along the line as far as Mey, for what reason it was impossible to say. The Germans did not think it worth while to reply, and the videttes phlegmatically continued their circling. In about an hour the French fire died away, having occasioned no casualty, save the wound to the man in our *repli*.

On the night of the 2nd of October a detachment of the 4th did a little job in the way of fire-raising. The neutral village of Nouilly, immediately to the front of Noisseville, has already been mentioned; it contained—or, at least, was believed to contain—considerable stores of provisions, which, however, were so secreted in the cellars and elsewhere, that the Prussians could not discover them. The inhabitants, however, had for the most part taken refuge in Metz, and it was natural that they should inform their military countrymen of the whereabouts of the provisions. It was equally natural that men on short commons should do their best to obtain all the food they could, from whatever source; and it is believed that when the French patrols had temporarily occupied Nouilly the night before,

they succeeded in carrying away with them some stores. The place lay so directly under the fire of Forts St. Julien and les Bottes that it was not tenable permanently by the Germans, and, therefore, there was no resource but to burn it.

A little after eight o'clock in the evening I was sitting at supper with Lieutenants von Hosius and Fischer, of the 5th Company of the 2nd Battalion of the 4th regiment. The quarters these good gentlemen occupied would hardly have been considered eligible by a London working-man looking for lodgings. The house had been burnt out twice, and the bare walls were now roofed in with a few planks loosely covered with straw. Door and window were both gone, but their place was not inefficiently supplied with blankets. There happened to be left a tolerably decent table, and one side of the apartment was littered with straw for a bed. We ate rather promiscuously on the foreposts round Metz. If anyone had anything exceptionally good for supper it was sure to ooze out, and then the fortunate man had an exceptional number of callers who "dropped in promiscuous" just as the dainty dish was upon the table. The dainty dish on this occasion consisted of salt herrings boiled with onions, and washed down with beer warmed with meal, lard, and schnaps. Lieutenant Fischer understood no English, but had a faculty for expressing his meaning pantomimically in a manner which I never

saw equalled. As a linguist Mr. von Hosius had a great superiority over his comrade. He knew some English. It is true his knowledge was not of a varied character. So far as ever I learned it was confined to "Good night," with which he was wont to take delight in saluting me about five in the morning, and a verse of "Lucy Long," with which he invariably essayed to follow up the conversation. Between the salt herrings, my German, Mr. Fischer's pantomime, and Mr. von Hosius's "Lucy Long," we were getting on as well as could be expected, when a feldwebel entered with an order for Lieutenant von Hosius, which the latter read aloud:—

"Lieutenant von Hosius will parade at nine o'clock with 15 volunteers of his company, and will proceed forward to burn the village of Nouilly."

Von Hosius was fond of salt herrings, and fond, too, of an opportunity of distinguishing himself. The Iron Cross for Valour was already in his button-hole. There were still herrings on the plate, and the hour was only half-past eight. Fischer, by his direction, went outside to call for volunteers, while he finished the herrings. The men lay about in a couple of dismantled rooms, and in the garden at the back of the house. "Volunteers to burn a village!" roared Fischer, into the midst of the

sleeping Kerle. Had he thrown a bomb among them he could not have caused a more instantaneous and universal start. Volunteers! He wanted fifteen, and here was the whole company round him like bees. He picked his fifteen, taking the men who had no wives at home in the Fatherland, and then came back to see if the mulled beer was done. By this time von Hosius had demolished the last of the herrings, and as time was short was setting about getting ready in the most systematic manner. Having pulled on his long boots, he pulled out of his portmanteau the little dagger which every officer wore to ward off the vultures of the battle-field in case of being wounded, and shoved his "Adams" revolver into his belt. Then, with a final glass of the composite beer, he sallied out to the spot where his little band was drawn waiting for him, and gave them a word or two of advice and precaution.

In truth, the undertaking was a most dangerous one. It partook, indeed, not a little of the nature of a forlorn hope. A few hundred yards in the rear of Nouilly we, it is true, had a *Feldwache,* but the French were nearer it on the other side by Mey and the Bois de Grimont, and had strong temptations for entering it by night. It might be that he might encounter a force of French inside the village. In that case, of what service would be his fifteen volunteers? It was almost certain that, if this contingency should not occur, the party

would encounter a fierce foe in the execution of their task, and it was probable that on their return they would be shelled both by St. Quentin and les Bottes. I left Hosius giving his order, and went on to the *repli* ground, through which he had to pass to get across the wine berg, and down into the valley in which Nouilly lies. In a few minutes came the measured tread of the little party, marching at the German quick step, which is faster than that of any army I know. Von Hosius as he passed hailed me laughingly with a parting "Miss Lucy, Lucy Long," and then disappeared in the darkness. For a while we could hear the crashing of the little band through the vines, and then came the hoarse challenge of the *Feldwache* rear sentry. Then all became quiet. The group by the watchfire in the *repli* gave sufficient evidence of the ticklish character of the enterprise. For a few minutes the officer in command of the *repli* and myself were the only persons who enjoyed its genial warmth. Then through the gloom came stalking the major, and, after a long look towards Nouilly, he squatted silently down by our side. Presently another form appeared, that of the genial colonel himself, who had been moved to forsake the society of the *curé* to come and see what success von Hosius should meet with. I don't know exactly how they came, but in half an hour nearly all the officers of the battalion were around the bright wood fire. Everybody

tried to appear unconcerned, but it was equally certain everybody was fidgety. The regiment had never yet failed in any duty assigned it, and if it failed now? Nobody liked to broach the subject, but I could see it was uppermost in the mind of all. And von Hosius was a tantalisingly long time in putting us out of our suspense. An hour had gone—Nouilly was but ten minutes forward from Noisseville—and the colonel's nervousness was undisguised as he hacked at the burning log with his naked sword, and drove his spur into the leg of his chair. The major had taken to walking up and down the inside of the entrenchment, and only the adjutant exhibited a thorough nonchalance, but then he was very sleepy.

The vigilant lieutenant of the *repli* gave a smothered shout, and we all sprang to our feet. Flame-coloured smoke at last and plenty of it. But surely, suggested the major, it really cannot be so far away as that. Why that lowering smoke is on the other side of the Bois de Grimont, and must be a private bonfire of the French—not the one which von Hosius was to fire. It was too true, the alarm was a false one. The colonel sat down again moodily, and the major began to mutter something that seemed to me very like swearing. As for the adjutant he went to sleep, and I very nearly followed his example. One thing was favourable, the dead silence that reigned in the valley. It was evident that von

Hosius had encountered no French in the place, else the rattle of the musketry would have been heard long ere now, and the battalion, which was standing to its arms at the various company posts, would have been lining the entrenchment with the needle-guns poked over the earthwork.

Another half hour of suspense, and then a loud "Ha!" simultaneously from the lieutenant on duty and the sentry. This time it was Nouilly, and no mistake. Von Hosius had taken his time, that he might do his work thoroughly. Not from one isolated house, but in six places at once, belched out the long streaks of flame against the black darkness, and the separate fires made as much haste to connect themselves as ever did commanders who were eager to feel their supports right and left. In ten minutes the whole place was in one grand blaze, the church steeple standing up in the midst of the sea of flame, as if it had round its turret the old motto of the Scottish Kirk, "*Nec tamen consumebatur.*" But, church steeple as it was, it had not the attribute of the burning bush, and a whole pyrotechnic display of sparks bore testimony to its fall. Here and there against the flame could be seen a human figure in frantic flight; and on a bluff just outside the village I saw in the strong light a woman standing wringing her hands. These were the innocent victims of war, the victims not of the Germans, but of him in whose ears the poor

serfs would three months ago have shouted "Vive l'Empereur."

Presently we heard again the crashing through the vine-brake, and our outpost sentry challenge. The watchword was returned in the hearty voice of von Hosius, and in five minutes more the little party was inside the entrenchment of the *repli*. Von Hosius, of rather a portly figure, was panting with the exertion of climbing the vine-hill, but he found breath enough to greet me with "Miss Lucy, Lucy Long." The affair had been singularly successful. The duty had been executed without the necessity of exchanging a single shot. The village, which burnt till five next morning, had been so effectually fired that all the stores which it might have contained must have been burnt; and so coolly had the enterprise been gone about, that a respectable old horse which was found in one of the stables of the village was led back in triumph, as a trophy. I suppose the French held their fire because they did not know whither to direct it. To have shelled Nouilly would only have been to play into the hands of the Prussians, and the destroying party might have come from Servigny, Noisseville, or Montoy. I lay down among the straw, and went to sleep with the echo of "Miss Lucy, Lucy Long" still haunting my ears.

On the foreposts we came to look upon the fortresses environing the town of Metz, much as the Naples

people regard and talk of Mount Vesuvius when that mountain is in an uneasy condition. During all the 3rd of October St. Julien had been quiet. St. Quentin had not emitted a single puff of smoke, and les Bottes might have been a flower-garden tended by pretty girls. The same calm reigned on the morning of the 4th up till eleven o'clock in the forenoon, and the martial population of Noisseville were taking it as easy as discipline would permit. To the left of the Brewery, an isolated house on the chaussée, a little in rear of Lauvallière and parallel with Noisseville on the south, a large body of troops were engaged in constructing large wooden barracks just in rear of the entrenchment line. These were being built for the accommodation of the troops holding the post of the Brewery, which had been reduced to ruins by the many bombardments which it had undergone. The French in les Bottes could see the progress of this work and the number of the men engaged in it; and the idea seemed to strike them that it might not be out of place to attempt to interrupt the building operations. Anyhow, they commenced rather a fierce shell fire on the unfinished barracks, and also on the unfortunate Brewery, under the shelter of which the working party was withdrawn when the first grenade came hurtling over the trees. The Brewery must by this time have been thoroughly well used to the visitation of shells, and there was this consolation for it, that

had it been exploded bodily it could not have been ruined much more utterly than it already was. All that it was good for was that the heap of stones which once had composed a rather imposing structure afforded a kind of shelter for troops drawn up in its rear. But even this office the Brewery was now rendered incapable of performing. The shells sent its loose stones flying in all directions, and it was thus that several men were wounded. The contagion of firing was communicated by les Bottes to the foreposts. These began blazing away at each other in a very level fashion, the Germans replying to the French fire with the chassepots, the use of which they had been practising sedulously for the last few days. Everybody had got so much used to this intermittent outpost fire that the only notice it met with was a whistle occasionally from some soldier moving about our village when a bullet went singing past him, or hit the wall a yard or two above his head. From firing at the wooden barracks and the Brewery, les Bottes took it into its head to throw a few shells into Servigny, the village to our right, and then St. Julien chimed in with its great cannon balls. Noisseville occupied an intermediate position between the Brewery and Servigny; but up till about one o'clock it had unaccountably escaped the polite attentions of the two French forts. About that hour, however, a great cannon-ball came whistling across from St. Julien, crashed through

the wall of a house in which most of the officers were quartered, and tumbled in among the stacked arms in an open space in the street, making a hole in which a horse might have been buried. Nobody was hurt; but the paymaster was nearly smothered with the débris which fell from the wall through which the great ball passed. Les Bottes followed St. Julien's example in firing into Noisseville, the latter projecting 42lb. and 64lb. shells, the former confining himself to cannon-balls. It was a great waste of powder and shot. Nobody was hurt, and all the effect was that a village already for the most part burnt and in ruins was destroyed a little more. The church was terribly wrecked by the cannon of St. Julien. Already the exterior had been knocked out of shape, but the inside retained much of its original integrity. A shell from St. Julien crashed right through the altar, and brought the cross on to the pavement in splinters. The fragment of a shell from les Bottes shivered a beautiful marble monument, splitting it right up the centre, and cutting in two the commemoration of the merits of a respectable defunct villager. The Virgin Mary, as she stood in marble against the wall, had a limb amputated, and was otherwise dismembered; and if the pastor had been in the pulpit when another shell struck it he would never have preached more. So hot became the cross-fire from the two fortresses that it was judged advisable to withdraw the troops out of the vil-

lage a few hundred yards to the rear. The *Feldwachen* were of course left in their positions, as also were two companies in the *repli* by the church; but the rest fell back into an orchard behind the village. It was great fun, in a sense, to be here and listen to the French pelting the village, under the idea, no doubt, that it was full of Prussian troops. We could hear the crashing of the rafters and the smashing of the walls as the huge projectiles tore through them, the shells exploding as they struck, and sending into the air a cloud of fragments. All this time the musketry fire on the foreposts was unceasing along a large portion of the line, and anyone dropping in casually upon the scene would have imagined quite an important battle was in progress. So little was this the case that the troops supporting Noisseville and lying in Flanville and Retonfay were not put under arms. The whole affair was an utterly useless ignition of powder, and its only effect was to suspend for the day the construction of the wooden barracks. When the firing had ceased we came back into the village, and several found that the quarters which they had quitted at one o'clock were no longer in existence at five. A few houses more or less ground to powder in Noisseville was, however, quite a trifle when the whole village might have been called a ruin. It surprised me to observe with what extraordinary force some of the projectiles had fallen. In a field beyond the church there

was a hole in the earth that might almost have served as the shaft of a mine. It marked the spot where had fallen a shell from les Bottes. The pioneers dug it out in the evening. They had to go to a depth of about six feet. The huge ugly affair had not exploded, and two men extricated it gently, and bore it in triumph, quite a little procession following, to lay it at the feet of the colonel. The shell was reckoned to be 110-pounder. Just fancy a missile of this magnitude striking a man full in the chest! It would hurl him in little pieces in all directions. Or fancy it exploding in the centre of a group, or in the heart of a column, and scattering its great skin, an inch and a half thickness of metal, in a shower of morsels, each about two inches square.

During the night, as I was told in the morning, les Bottes and St. Julien renewed the firing on Noisseville. I confess to sleeping so soundly, that I was in blessed ignorance of the circumstance, but when I turned out in the morning I fell into a hole that was the crater of an exploded shell, about two paces from the place where once there had been a door. Several other shells fell in the immediate vicinity, and the poor church got another blow or two. The 4th Regiment, on the morning of the 5th October, was relieved by the 44th Regiment, from Retonfay, with whom it exchanged quarters. Retonfay is a squalid village, which was included in the second line of environment. Close to it was a fine château,

inhabited for the time by General Zglinitzky, who commanded the brigade. It was the turn of the 4th for a spell on rest, and the officers who, in the front line, were not at liberty to quit their commands for an hour, were now comparatively at large for the time. As soon as we reached Retonfay, and had taken up quarters, one of them was kind enough to accompany me in a ride as far as the Moselle, on the north side of Metz. We everywhere traversed the extreme edges of the foreposts, and the ride was a very interesting one. From Retonfay we struck the first line at the unfortunate Servigny—that once pretty village, at which St. Julien seemed to have so especial a spite.. There was not much of Servigny to speak of—a few gable ends of walls, and here and there the walls of a house without a roof. A battalion of the 45th contrived somehow to find quarters among the ruins, and a few villagers still wandered about in a ghostly fashion. From Servigny we passed over a considerable ridge, to the charming village of Poix, lying snugly at the opening of a valley which tends downward toward the Moselle. This village is surrounded in all directions by beautiful villas, the summer residences of the wealthier inhabitants of Metz. An isolated suburb near the top of the ridge had suffered severely from the fire of St. Julien—indeed, occasional shells were bursting in it as we passed, but the village itself had not been much injured, and the German

troops had respected its amenities in a very surprising manner. A Division General dwelt amid roses and honeysuckles, in one of the principal chateaux, built in rustic Elizabethan, and beautifully furnished—the Feld-post inhabited the gardener's rustic lodge in the grounds. Vremy lies a little to the rear in the bottom of the valley, which here assumes the character of a gorge, and the road compels a detour into it, which was repaid us by the observation of the admirable manner in which its houses and churchyard walls had been converted into defensive works, thoroughly blocking up the gorge. Leaving Vremy, and the hospitable officers who dwelt therein, we rode down the valley to Failly, a considerable village, in which, until a few days previous, had been the head-quarters of General Kummer, commanding the Landwehr, now gone across the Moselle. From Failly there is a direct road to the Moselle at Malroy, but, by a slight detour, the opportunity offered itself of getting very close to the Bois de Grimont, which was full of French troops, and of inspecting, at a comparatively short distance, the fortress of St. Julien. An officer in Failly told us laughingly, that there were two very beautiful young women in Villiers l'Orme, the village which is so near to the Bois de Grimont, and I am not certain that this information did not operate with my companion as an additional argument for visiting the place. L'Orme is a very prettily situated little

village, just on the edge of the tableland on which stand Grimont and St. Julien. We saw nothing of the beautiful maidens, but the place was full of inhabitants, and the children were playing merrily about, quite regardless, to all appearance, of the fact that the place is within three hundred yards of the French outposts. L'Orme was unoccupied by the Germans during the day. At night a small party, under the command of an under officer, was wont to go forward, and take up a position behind it. Occasionally, stragglers from the French outposts visited it, we were told, in search of food. From the shelter of one of its houses, we could see quite easily with the naked eye, the French outposts—the men cooking or lying down, and the sentries walking to and fro. Behind was the forest, and then the Monastery of Grimont, while over the whole of the quiet little scene, St. Julien frowned grimly, casting forward his dark shadow in the afternoon sunlight. L'Orme had wonderfully escaped the ravages of war. Both parties seemed to have agreed to respect it, probably on account of the number of villagers who still continued to reside in it. I was told that not a single shell had been fired into the village. But while we were there, the shells were flying over our heads towards Vany and Charly, and it seemed strange to see the children playing in the street, the girls driving home the cows, and the old women placidly spinning in front of their doors, when

the missiles were whistling through the air above their heads.

The French might have respected l'Orme, but they assuredly had no such tenderness for anybody happening to traverse the space which intervenes between l'Orme and Chieulles. The track led athwart an open field, with a hedge in the rear, and the French posts lined the wood continuously, at a distance of about five hundred yards. The distance is about half a mile, and, unless we chose to make a very considerable detour, there was no alternative but to run the gauntlet. My military friend went first, at a brisk hand canter. He had hardly shown his horse's head beyond the cover of the houses of l'Orme, when the Frenchmen commenced saluting him with chassepot bullets. I followed at a short interval, and as the bullets became thicker and faster, our canter became a gallop. The horses were fresh, and also desperately timid; ever as a bullet whistled past them, and cut the twigs in the hedge, they gave a bound and a shy that necessitated very close adhesion to the pig-skin. I was by no means sorry when we got into Chieulles, a village a little farther retired from the point-blank range of fire, and which had also, by mutual consent, been held as a neutral territory. There were in it plenty of inhabitants, who seemed to have got quite familiarised to their strange position, and carried on their ordinary avocations as if the war were miles away.

The village is rather a large one, and contains several considerable buildings. From it our road lay to the left rear, to a *Feldwache* outside the village of Vany, and then into the village itself. The French outposts gave us one parting salute as we sallied out of Chieulles, and this evoked a response from the *Feldwache* for which we were making. We left the hostile outposts firing away at each other very briskly, and rode forward, accompanied by a cavalry officer, into Charly, a beautiful village, containing many châteaux, and standing embowered amidst orchards. Here one of the points of the battle of the 31st August was contested with great desperation. All around the village the graves lay thick, now German, now French. The bayonet had been at work that day in the environs of Charly, and in one of its alleys took place a fierce and long-continued hand-to-hand contest. It was very pretty to see how tastefully the German troops had decorated the graves of their dead comrades. They had made them up with turf, and planted flowers and shrubs on the ridge, while at the head of each stood a wooden cross, on which was painted the name and rank of him who lay below. The French graves were not thus tended, but neither were they neglected. Brave soldiers never draw distinctions between the last resting-places of foes and friends. The graves of the French had been surrounded by hedges of shrubs, and the cross had been set up at the head of each.

From Charly we rode on to Malroy, a considerable village lying on the Moselle, about two miles north of Fort St. Julien. It was necessary, however, to ride up the stream some distance to find the first pontoon bridge crossing it at Argancey. Some distance higher up, at Hautconcourt, there was another pontoon bridge, and close to it, at Ennery, a very large depôt of provisions and stores for the supply of the northern portion of the besieging army. Immediately on crossing the Moselle, we came among the Landwehr men. "These men need not fear comparison with the finest regiments of the regular army," that was my first remark to my companion. So far as I could discern, the only distinction lay in the fact that the Landwehr had more hair on their faces, as a general rule, than the line troops. About eight-and-twenty to two-and-thirty seemed the general age of the Landwehr men; and as regards a martial carriage they would not suffer alongside the Guards.

Riding leisurely back by a more circuitous route than that we had pursued in going, we were near Failly when the sun disappeared in a glorious setting behind the yellow crest of St. Quentin. Hardly had it disappeared when a flash came from out of the shadow over against St. Agathe. The roar of a heavy gun came booming across the valley, and the sound had not died away before there was another flash and another roar. In

five minutes the whole slope for a distance of nearly a mile and a half was lit up by continual flashes of artillery fire. Then the batteries of St. Eloy took up the reply, with a slower but steady fire of its heavy guns, their roar coming to us deadened by the thick fog which was rising from the Moselle. The sight in the growing darkness was indescribably grand. We sat on horseback on the summit of the ridge at Poix, watching and listening, till St. Julien thought fit to chime in on his own account, and his big shells gave us notice to quit the ridge by the suburb of Poix on which we were standing. About eight o'clock we returned to Retonfay, on the plateau before which we found the brigade-general, and nearly all the officers of the battalions lying there, standing watching and listening to the gun-fire. Soon after eight it began to slacken, and presently died away altogether; all through the night both St. Julien and les Bottes kept the German lines on the alert by an occasional reminder, consisting of a 64-lb. shell.

The 6th was a quiet day on the east side, although the din came to us of a continuous bombardment from the other side of the Moselle to the north side. By special request of the troops stationed in Retonfay, there was divine service in the morning in a meadow in the village. The division chaplain officiated, and the brigadier-general was present with his staff. It was a fine

sight to see the six battalions, numbering as many thousand men, drawn up in a hollow square, with the clergyman and the regimental band in the centre. The service commenced with a hymn, in which all the troops joined with fervour. Then the minister preached a kind of informal sermon. He selected no Scripture text, his text was the duty of a Christian soldier in war time. His words evidently came from the heart, and as evidently went to the heart. When he spoke of the friends at home longing for tidings from the front and yet half afraid to hear them lest they should learn that the loved one had fallen in battle, many were the heads bent down on the manly chests, and many a gallant soldier held his hand before his eyes to hide the starting tear. It was remarkable what an effect the chaplain's words had in stimulating correspondence when the service was over. Round each Feldwebel there was quite a little crowd eager to obtain the "Correspondence Karte" on which the troops mostly wrote their brief epistles, and the post corporal had enough to do to carry the great bag with which he went over to the Feldpost in Flanville. A little after the service I was sitting with the paymaster and another officer, when a knock came to the door, and there entered a great hulking fellow from Dantzic, who sheepishly asked the paymaster to accommodate him with paper money for his bullion. How much do you think he had? Why, counting pfennigs

and a queer collection of kreutzers, he could make up just one thaler, and this huge remittance the great honest manly fellow wished to send to the Frau away on the shore of the Baltic. It was only three shillings, but it was the last stiver the man had, and he would go without his glass of beer till next pay day came round. Fancy an English soldier coming to his officer with a handful of half-pence for conversion into paper money! But a German regiment is one great brotherhood, and the paymaster pocketed the coppers and gave the man the paper thaler with a kindly word and look, for has he not a Frau of his own in Königsberg, whose portrait lies against that broad chest of his?

In the evening there was a camp fire, an institution not unknown at Wimbledon in the early days of the Volunteer movement, when as yet the encampment was but small, and when Lord Elcho's sonorous voice could be heard over the whole gathering. During peace time, there is a camp fire—or a gathering equivalent to it—once a week in every Prussian regiment, to which the married officers bring their good ladies, and whither also the "beauty and fashion" of the garrison town are invited. "Beauty and fashion" were represented in Retonfay by a few French crones of fabulous age, who confined their remarks to muttering "Mon Dieu" continuously, and who, I suspect, would gladly have poisoned the whole regiment if they could have done

so without risk to themselves. But nevertheless we had our camp fire, and that, too, under quite imposing circumstances. The spot selected was a pretty meadow by the side of a stream, about two hundred yards from the village. An officer of taste, and with a capital eye for landscape gardening, had devoted himself from a very early hour in the morning to perfecting the arrangements. With a fatigue party, he had thrown a pretty rustic bridge across the stream, and lined the path leading to it with green boughs. With these, too, he had enclosed a large circle, with a smaller area close by for the band, and in the centre of the larger circle a great bonfire had been built, its foundation raised by the earth excavated from a trench dug around it. All the chairs in the village were collected, and most of the tables, and placed in picturesque confusion around this central point. The officers began to gather about five o'clock. They were all so smart that I felt ashamed of my old tweed shooting jacket and dilapidated wideawake. The parade coats had been dug out of the bottom of portmanteaus, and looked quite spruce and natty. Boots had been polished to a pitch that might have stimulated the admiration of Day and Martin. Spurs and buttons glittered brightly in the setting sun. Then our worthy colonel —Oberst von Dietzen-Hennig — made his appearance, accompanied by his staunch ally the major. The colonel, too, was evidently on ceremony, for he wore the sword

which King Wilhelm had presented to him with his own hands the evening of one of the battles of the 1866 campaign. All rose to greet the commanding officer, and immediately that he was seated, the band struck up. So thoroughly was the affair managed, that an elaborately written programme of the music was laid on the colonel's table, of which I took a copy. It may interest English readers to know what music a Prussian regimental band played, while the bass accompaniment was furnished by the roar of the guns over against us on the other side of the Moselle. Here is a copy of the programme :

Fest Overture	Fischer.
An der schönen blauen Donau Walzer	Strauss.
La Belle Amazone	Loischhorn.
March Potpourri	Bach.
Künstler Fest Quadrille	Hermann.
Fanfare Militaire	Ascher.

It was a very pretty sight. About forty officers were present, grouped picturesquely around the tables. Military servants circulated everywhere, serving the company with glasses of beer. The outside of the bough-enclosed circle was lined with the men of the various battalions, who crowded to the spot, under the attraction of the music. More hearty good fellowship could not be imagined. The colonel and the youngster who won his silver shoulder straps but the day before were on the most equal footing. In an interval of the music a young officer came into the circle who had just returned from

the hospital at Düsseldorf, whither a bullet through the foot in the battle of the 31st August had sent him. Then he had been only a Feldwebel, but he had got his lieutenancy when lying on his back, and this was his first appearance among his comrades since his promotion. As he came forward the colonel rose and called for a bumper to the health of his gallant young friend. The young fellow bowed and blushed as all obeyed the chief's order, following the draught with a cheer that must have been heard at St. Julien. Then the colonel was good enough to disarrange the programme for the introduction of "Rule Britannia" as a special token of consideration to the Englander present. By this time the darkness had begun to fall, and the bonfire was formally set fire to, the circle breaking up from the tables, and re-forming around its cheerful blaze. The band exhausted the programme, and took to playing song tunes, the officers chiming in lustily with their voices, and the men on the outskirts taking up the chorus. The scene was one in which a painter would have delighted—the bright wood-fire lighting up the faces of the circle around it, and ever and anon, as it shot up more brightly, dissipating the thick darkness beyond, and flashing on the faces of the men through the boughs. But no painter could give effect to what was to me the most weird phase of the affair—the measured thud of the cannonading sounding between every pause in the music or lull in the din of

the conversation; and it was strange, too, to reflect that, as we sat here cheerily, we were still within the range of the great guns of St. Julien. I could not help thinking of the effect which a forty-two pound shell would have had had it fallen and exploded right in the heart of the bonfire. The good fellows of the 4th, however, troubled themselves with no such speculations. It was sufficient for them that St. Julien was quiet, and that the fire was cheery, the company good, and the beer reasonably plentiful, and palatable. In the course of the evening one of the captains gave a toast, which was received with intense enthusiasm—the health of the gallant comrades who had won the decoration of the Iron Cross. It was on the breast of at least half those who sat round the fire. When the cheering had subsided the band struck up the "Paris" march, a *souvenir* of 1813, in remembrance of which campaign the Iron Cross was first instituted. About half-past eight the colonel gave the toast of "Our Comrades of the Artillery," in honour of some gentlemen of that service who were present, and then, after the band had played "God Save the King," said good night, and went away to his supper. I followed him in a very short time, but when I came outside to smoke my cigar in the moonlight, before turning in among the straw, I could still hear the merry chorus down in the meadow by the camp-fire. It was then about eleven o'clock, and how long after the last of the

roisterers may have kept it up I have not the slightest idea.

The foggy morning of the 7th October ushered in what turned out to be the most important and determined sortie made by Bazaine since the failure of the 31st of August. I know not whether the French gave to the affair a name; the Germans recognized it as the "Schlacht bei Maizières." Battles there were in plenty in this bloody campaign that showed a larger total of killed and wounded; but the "Schlacht bei Maizières" made widows and orphans in the Fatherland far beyond proportion; for the men who bore the brunt of it were husbands and fathers,—the stout Landwehrmen of the Division Kummer. I had quitted Retonfay early in the grey morning with the intention of making the complete circuit of the environment of Metz before my return. The morning was extremely misty. As I reached the eminence at Poix I could barely see Mount St. Quentin above the fog in the valley, the sun's rays striking upon its warm grey peak. It seemed as if a general armistice had been declared; even the forepost fire had dropped. Crossing the Moselle at Argancey, I made first for the Château of Amelange, and afterwards in a direction due Metz-ward, until I reached the furthest *Feldwache* at Maxe. Then I struck across the valley, inclining rather to the rear, first to Grandes

and then to Petites Tapes, in both of which there lay only an under-officer's guard of nine men; and avoiding Ladonchamps, by advice, I reached St. Rémy, where I found on duty the 59th Landwehr Regiment. Thence my journey lay still athwart the remotest fore-posts to Norroy and Plesnois, the latter village being in the heart of the Bois de Saulny, and my road then lay straight southward on St. Hubert, on the south-west of Mount St. Quentin. I detail the different stages of this ride as it was right across the theatre of the afternoon's fight, and because the quietude everywhere in the morning formed so strong a contrast to the sudden hurly-burly of the afternoon.

Near Plesnois my horse cast a shoe, and as the road was rugged I was rather in a fix, when there rode past a staff officer attached to the head-quarters of Baron Schüler von Senden, commanding the 2nd Division of the Landwehr. This gentleman was quartered in Maizières, and he most courteously invited me to return with him thither and be his guest for the night. On the return journey this gentleman gave me some information which contributed materially to an understanding of the events which followed. In the bombardment of the two previous days the position occupied by the batteries of German heavy guns had been at Frenecourt, near the commencement of the rise of the hills some distance to the south-west of Maizières. To speak

more precisely, they were stationed on the low heights of Le Horiment, on the rising ground behind which there stood an observatory commanding the whole plain. But the Germans had batteries considerably to the front of Frenecourt. Six field batteries stood mid-way between it and Sennecourt, and on the 6th they had pushed forward a second battery as far as Sennecourt itself. From these several positions the bombardment of St. Eloy had been going forward intermittingly, and also a shell-fire into the village of Ladonchamps, some little distance nearer Metz than St. Rémy, on the line of railway. Till lately this village had been reckoned neutral territory, but on the 2nd October the French had seized it, and established a battery in front of it. The village itself had been burnt the same night by German shells, but still the French had retained the position, and the German fire in the intervening days had been partly directed to the dislodgment of the enemy from a position which was important, as the occupants of it could enfilade the whole front across the valley. On the 6th nearly a thousand shells had been thrown into Ladonchamps and the neighbourhood, and late in the evening the French had evacuated the shattered fragments of a once smiling village. The Germans had at once thrown forward troops in its direction, establishing their *replis* in its rear, and sending forward sergeants' parties to occupy

it and Grandes and Petites Tapes villages, to which its possession was the key. St. Rémy constituted the chief support, and here lay the 59th Regiment of the Landwehr. Maxe, close to the river, and considerably in advance, was occupied, as I already knew, by outposts detailed by the 10th Army Corps, from the other side of the Moselle. The two divisions of the Landwehr stretched right athwart the valley from the bridge at Argancey, where they touched the 10th Army Corps, to near Marange, where they met the 3rd Corps, and to the Landwehrmen was thus confided the duty of keeping the flat alluvial tract on the western bank of the Moselle. This was the substance of the information which my friend of the staff communicated to me on our ride to Maizières. Here I found the head-quarters of General von Kummer. About one o'clock I was sitting at lunch with two staff officers in an arbour in his garden, when the guns of the German batteries by Sennecourt began to give tongue. "Only a few Frenchmen loafing round Ladonchamps," observed one of the officers. "There will be nothing serious to-day; there is too much mist in the valley." Certainly it seemed as if he must be right. When I had been on the heights at Sennecourt I could not see the villages in the valley below, nor the Cathedral of Metz. Fort St. Quentin, our constant landmark, had been utterly invisible. But the roar of the guns grew louder and

louder, and then came first one great boom, and then another, from the big guns lying behind at Frenecourt. The officers fidgeted, but still would not own that anything was the matter. But their *nonchalance* gave way when an aide-de-camp came up at the gallop, spreading the alarm everywhere as he went, and dashing on to the general's quarters for instructions to guide the front. In five minutes more we were all in the saddle, and, after a short gallop, were looking out on the scene of action from the fringe of the wood in front of the Châteaux of Brieux and Amelange. That the reader may understand the tactics of Bazaine and the manner in which they were foiled, it will be necessary to give a brief description of the ground. From Metz to Maizières there is a long trough, with a flat bottom—the alluvial margin of the Moselle. This tract is about four English miles wide. On the west it is bounded by the heights I have already named, and nearer Metz by those of Norroy and Saulny. On the east it is bounded by a lower series of bluffs, on which stand the villages of Olgy and Malroy; but between them and the flat bottom runs the Moselle, infringing considerably on the flat expanse just opposite Olgy. Across this bottom, at the narrowest part thus formed, lies a series of villages—the two Tapes and St. Rémy, with Maxe and Ladonchamps respectively slightly to the east and west front. More or less, there were German troops in all

those. The dispositions detailed to me by the staff officer had been substantially maintained. Bazaine had laid his scheme with great art. Covered by the dense fog, he had made his dispositions with such adroitness that when it lifted, a little past one, his arrangements were already all but complete. In the first instance, he directed a strong assault on Ladonchamps. The Landwehr outpost held the place as if they were 10,000 instead of 100 men, and the French sent their infantry swarming into it, while their artillery played upon it. "Only an attempt to re-occupy Ladonchamps," quoth my friend of the staff, as he lit a fresh cigar; "the guns will teach them the folly of that, and we can go back to our arbour." It seemed, truly, if any argument could be convincing, that the German artillery must be so. The white spurts of smoke were visible all round the valley. On the right front the batteries at Sennecourt were hard at work, and also others nearer us on the flat, while the great guns at Frenecourt were sending shells at a long range right over Ladonchamps in among the advancing French. Then, on our left, before Amelange, two other batteries were maintaining a semi-cross fire; and from the bluffs, on the other side of the Moselle, between Olgy and Malroy, the Prussian field artillery were also roaring. But my friend of the staff was not, for an hour or two at all events, to see the arbour. The attack on Ladonchamps was a diversion.

Suddenly the villages of Grandes and Petites Tapes, of St. Rémy and Maxe were overwhelmed by a cataract of Frenchmen. The battalion of the 59th Landwehr which held St. Rémy would not fall back, as it should have done in common prudence, but stood up there in the street till the French having played upon it with their artillery, and rained on it chassepot and mitrailleuse bullets, finally pushed backwards the shattered remnant on to the chaussée by dint of sheer numbers. The Fusilier battalion of the 58th occupied Grandes Tapes, and it occupied Grandes Tapes when the fight was done, but the occupation consisted of the dead and the wounded. The battalion would not give ground, and may be said to have been annihilated as it stood, the men with their backs to the wall and their faces to the foe. It afterwards transpired that 300 men of this battalion were made prisoners, after a desperate resistance, and sent into Metz. The other battalions of the same regiment suffered terribly. So far, then, Bazaine had succeeded. He had re-occupied the chain of villages athwart the valley, and had got a few batteries of artillery out to their front to reply to the German fire. But the status quo he neither wished to, nor could retain. The German artillery, throwing its projectiles from three sides of the parallelogram, interfered with the realization of the latter conception. As regarded the former, it seemed clear that Bazaine would not have

done what he had if he did not contemplate something more. That something, I have not the remotest doubt, was a sortie to establish connections with Thionville. His tactics were well conceived. From St. Rémy and the two Tapes he kept the German fire engrossed, both musketry and artillery. He sent forward from Grandes Tapes great swarms of tirailleurs, who fared extremely ill at the hands of Landwehr men. But, besides this, he massed in the rear what was, beyond all question, a very large force. There must have been nearly 20,000 in all on the bank of the Moselle, and under cover of the houses of Maxe. The head of this force he hurled forward to cut through the German cincture where it was weakest, close to the river. The moment was a critical one. Those regiments of the Landwehr which had not already been sent forward against the villages were too far to the westward to be in time to meet this attack as it ought to be met—directly face to face. But the 10th Army Corps had been crossing the pontoon bridge, and massing between the river and Amelange. Their general, Voight Rhetz, was in nominal command of the day's operations, and he gave the order for several regiments to advance. It was a sight never to be forgotten. First came the Fusiliers, extending at a rapid run into skirmishing order, and covering the whole plain with their long thin lines. Then the dense columns of companies of the Grenadiers, the bands

playing and the colours unfurled—unwonted sight. But all the work was not left wholly for the infantry to do. The artillery, for the moment, left the villages alone, and concentrated their fire on the advancing columns of the French by the Moselle. There was but little response from the French field artillery, but the sullen sides of St. Julien flashed out smoke and fire, and from the earthworks of St. Eloy came missiles at the shorter ranges. The mitrailleuse venomously sounded its angry whirr, making the skirmishers recoil nervously as they crossed the line of its fire, and tearing chasms in the fronts of the solid masses of which they were the forerunners. The artillery and the skirmishers were enough for the French. The dense columns staggered and then broke. Through my glass I could see a continuous *sauve qui peut* into the village of Maxe. But when they had once got stone and lime between them and the Germans, the French were obstinate and would go no further. In vain the German artillery pounded into the villages, advancing closer and closer in alternate order of batteries with a precision and rapidity that could not have been exceeded on Woolwich-common. That obstinate battery in front of Grandes Tapes would not cease, and the French tirailleurs still lined the chaussée in its front. By this time it was nearly four o'clock, and there was a lull on our side that seemed ominous. As we stood in this suspense a staff officer

galloped along the front line with orders for a general advance to take the villages by storm. The attack he hurriedly told me was to consist of the four brigades of the Landwehr, with a division of the 10th Army Corps on the left and supporting. In a few minutes more the command came sounding along the line, and the men sprang from their cover and went forward with that steady quick step so characteristic of the German marching. The shells from the battery in front of Grandes Tapes tore through the line, the mitrailleuse and chassepot bullets poured against it their leaden hail, but still the Landwehr, silent and stern, went steadily to the front. The oldest veteran in the field was never in a more furious fire than that to which the centre of this line was exposed. General von Brandenstein, commanding the third brigade of the Landwehr, was shot down close to me, and several of his staff were wounded. At length the entrenchments were reached, behind which were lying the shattered remnants of the 59th and 58th Landwehr. The fraternisation consisted in the cry of "Hurrah Preussen!" and then "Vorwärts—immer vorwärts!" and the line threw itself to its front at a run. The gunners from the battery, brave men and stubborn, had barely time to run round the corner before the Landwehrmen were upon them. The guns they left perforce. In the villages the French made a last stand, but it had been better for them that they had run away at

first. The Landwehrmen, with less of the conventional warrior in them than the Line, were not so much inclined to give quarter as are the professional soldiers. With many a Frenchman this afternoon the shrift consisted of a bayonet thrust. They fought like devils in the narrow ways of the villages, and used the mitrailleuses with rare judgment and effect. But then there came the steady inexorable stride forward of the Landwehr men, the bayonet lent force with that huge thigh and back power which is the leading characteristic in an athletic sense of the German physique, and the villages were cleared of all save victors, dead, and wounded.

To the Landwehr must be conceded the honour of the fray. They it was who checked the rush of the French advance by holding the villages till they had not a man that could stand upright and fire the needle gun. To them also was entrusted the grand final advance which swept the French out of the villages. I had seen the German Line soldiers fight before this day. I had learned to believe that they could do aught any soldiers in the world could do. But it was not till now that I gauged the calibre of the Landwehr, how that in all things they were the equals of their brethren of the Line. Cool in the intrenchments, when they lay calmly in position, picking up the bullets that fell among them—resolute, indomitable, in their steady quick march forward, and then irresistible in the final rush with which they carried

the villages—they were troops to delight the heart of a man with a soldierly instinct. Nothing was more observable than the cool manner in which the wounded went to the rear in the general advance—every man depending on himself if he could walk at all, declining the services of assistants to help him out of the fray. Nor were they slight wounds with which these gallant fellows struggled unaided to the rear. One, for instance, to whom I spoke, was shot right through the lungs, and at every step his breath came panting through the bullet-hole. It might be that he struggled on till he reached the straw in the court-yard of the Château of Amelange, where the doctors were toiling up to their elbows in blood; but I fear his was one of the many bodies that checkered the green fields behind the advance. Gallant fellows as they were, it went to one's heart to see the Landwehr fight and die. Not like a linesman could they take their life in their hand and go down into the fray conscious that nobody would hunger because they fell. For every second Landwehrman that fell at Maizières there was a widow in the Fatherland, and, with children of my own around my hearth, my heart swelled to think of the number of unconscious orphans made that sunshiny autumn afternoon in the pleasant villages and the quiet plains of Deutchland. Pray God that, fight who may, there may be no more deadly battles in which the Landwehr shall have to take part. Not that, as it

seemed to me, they dwelt upon the thought of Frau and Kinder. The hairy Kerl, with the grey in his beard, and who knew how many young birds were in his nest, went straight to the front as boldly as the sprightly young volunteer who had only a girl to weep for him if he fell. But they are a prayerful people those Germans, and I fancied, when the word "Vorwärts" came sounding through the ranks, that many a man bent his head for a moment into his hand, as if he were entering a church.

On my way to the rear, after the brunt of the fight was over, I looked into the court-yard of the Château of Amelange, where the doctors were hard at work. The men lay all around waiting for their turn, and smoking like so many lime-kilns. Here already by five o'clock there were quite two hundred wounded, and those in Amelange were but a handful compared to the gross number that had been wounded. The doctors, with shirt sleeves up and coat off, were toiling with blood-smeared hands with cool but nimble dexterity. One of them seemed something between a cannibal and a butcher as he looked up for a moment from a case with a bloody knife-blade between his teeth.

In the evening, postal celerity being an object, I left Maizières to ride to Courcelles. Immediately after crossing the pontoon bridge at Argancey, a detour became necessary. The German artillery was still firing in the

moonlight from the heights above Olgy, and St. Julien was sluggishly throwing projectiles on to the tableland, seemingly to shut up their fire. All the ground in the rear of Charly and toward Fany was pitted with shells that had fallen and burst during the day. A brisk musketry fire was still going on in front of Chieulles and l'Orme, so quiet when I had ridden through them in the morning. The French, pouring down out of the Bois de Grimont, had made a feigned attack in considerable force up this valley, and the old women and children in Chieulles must have had their equanimity not a little disturbed. All I could hear as I rode through the villages was, that a good many had been killed and wounded; and I met a large ambulance train coming forward into the fire from out the village of Vremy. Poix had been shelled during the day, but all was now quiet there. A little further on I came to the rear of Servigny and Noisseville, from which I met my friends of the 4th returning singing triumphantly. The French from Mey and the slope in front of St. Julien had sent three battalions into Nouilly, and thence had attempted to storm the *repli* in front of Noisseville, but had been repulsed with considerable loss, the German artillery driving them out of Nouilly into the wood. I was in time to accompany a tentative advance of the German artillery along the chaussée right under the earthworks of Little Belle Croix, which was chiefly remarkable from the cir-

cumstance that St. Julien made no effort to arrest the operation. I afterwards learnt that there was further fighting in the early part of the night in front of St. Rémy, and that a battalion of the 81st had been forced to retake Ladonchamps at the bayonet point, losing in the task five officers and over one hundred men.

It is not difficult, I think, to form a tolerably correct opinion as to the plan of Bazaine's tactics of the 7th. I am aware that the importance of this sortie has been belittled by testimony from the interior of Metz, but I have a habit of believing in what I see, and the evidence of eyesight was corroborated as well by prisoners taken in the affair as by conversations with responsible and well-informed men on the other side, after the capitulation of Metz. At the lowest estimate Bazaine must have had 100,000 men, who, so far as the defence of Metz was concerned, were superfluous, and, therefore, detrimental. A hundred thousand men will sooner consume a given quantity of provisions than will twenty thousand; and when the larger number reach starvation point, the surrender of everything—field troops, garrison, fortress, and town—must occur. But for their appreciation of this eventuality, nothing would have pleased the Germans better than to have opened a fair passage to Bazaine any hour in the twenty-four. He might have come outside the cordon and welcome with 100,000 men, and in the course of the following day, when he was holding a council

of war, and debating, *more Gallico*, whether to march on Sedan or strike southward and cut the German communications, a hundred thousand Teutons and more would have fallen upon him from all points of the compass and smitten him hip and thigh. But if his field army had been chopped into fragments, the fortress of Metz, with its garrison left inside, would still have confronted the besiegers, and its reduction would have been postponed in proportion to the procrastination of the starvation point effected by the fewer mouths to feed. Of all this Bazaine, a capable man, whose merits, within certain limits, the Germans acknowledged frankly, could not have failed to be aware. He objected to capitulation simpliciter in the fortress, or to the alternative of capitulation or annihilation in the open field. But there lay the Moselle, beckoning him on to the half-way house of Thionville, and beyond Thionville, at the distance of a single forced march, lay the frontier. Oh! if he could only dash out through that vexatious cordon. True, across the broad plain lay the divisions of the Landwehr. A regular soldier himself, Bazaine had probably learned to despise the Garde Mobile with all the contempt of a veteran used to command veteran troops; and nothing was more natural than for a Frenchman to reason from a false analogy that, as the Garde Mobile, so were the Landwehr. The result gave him to digest his misconception as best he might. But the conception of Bazaine's effort was

creditable to his knowledge of the military art. While he made his grand effort against the Landwehr in the valley, he did his best to keep the other sections of the environing circle from finding leisure to concentrate in support of them. The attack on Vany, L'Orme, and Chieulles was well calculated to engross the 10th Army Corps; that from Mey on Noisseville and Servigny might well perform the same office with regard to the 1st Army Corps; the 7th Army Corps might be supposed to have their hands pretty well full with the sortie against Peltre, Mercy-le-Haut, and Ars-Laquenexy, and with luck this sortie, too, might get through as far as the depôt at Courcelles, and bring back of its abundance to the Gardes Nationaux, who were plying the big guns on the ramparts, and to the hungry citizens. The well-conceived feint against Ladonchamps was intended to keep the 3rd Army Corps in play, occupying as it did the slopes between the valley and the fort of Plappeville. And then—there was but the Landwehr to cope with, and surely 40,000 veteran French troops might crash through the lines of these citizen soldiers, weakened as those lines were by elongation across the whole plateau. Then, hey for Thionville! only ten miles off, where a secure lair might be had under the guns of that fortress while the columns caught their wind; and then, picking up by the way what superfluous troops there might be in its garrison, who could say what next for

an army with no impedimenta? Had the design succeeded Metz would have been a tougher nut for the Germans to crack than ever, for their policy of starvation would have been seriously compromised.

The two grand blunders which defeated the scheme were the misconception on Bazaine's part of the strength, prowess, and effective dispositions of the Landwehr, and the mistaken idea that his feints to the right and left would so engross the 10th and 3rd Army Corps as to prevent them from aiding the Landwehr to give him check on the plateau. His error on the former point must have come to him when he saw his regulars recoiling pell-mell from the Landwehrmen in the villages; the salvoes of artillery sent by the 10th Army Corps from Malroy, Olgy, and other heights on the east side of the Moselle, and by the 3rd Army Corps from Frenecourt, Sennecourt, and the heights above St. Rémy, all coigns of vantage on the bluffs on the western fringe of the valley, must have made him comprehend that a feigned attack, even if inconsiderable, was not capable of engrossing the full attention of a German Army Corps. The batteries on the positions I have named enfiladed him ruinously. Down the valley there tore a fierce direct fire from the batteries at Amelange and those in front of Brieux, which advanced by alternate batteries with as much coolness and precision as I have seen the troops of a cavalry regiment working in the Phœnix

Park; while from the heights on either side came such a cross-fire that I was filled with respect for the troops of Bazaine, when I realised the fact that they waited for the infantry assault to dislodge them from their position. Add to Bazaine's disadvantages that he was miserably short of field artillery, and the conclusion is obvious that he could not but have failed under the circumstances, while the deduction was no less patent that the frustration of any future attempt was equally inevitable.

On the morning of the 8th, the aspect of affairs was still threatening. It seemed as if the turn had come round of the 1st Army Corps on the east side of the environment. When the sun rose the French were seen accumulated in dense masses between Fort St. Julien and the village of Mey. Both St. Julien and les Bottes maintained a continuous if somewhat discursive cannonade, making the stones fly all about the village of Noisseville, whither I had hurried on the first alarm. From 7 A.M. till early in the forenoon, there came the din of warm artillery fire from the direction of Peltre and Mercy-le-Haut. At daylight the whole of our first and second lines were drawn forward in support of the first line, and the advance posts had fallen back. At nine a battery of German field-artillery opened on the French infantry from the angle of the church of Noisseville, and located in a cunning overbank emplacement, was not to be dislodged by all that St. Julien and les Bottes could do with

that intent. About mid-day, however, a furious pelt of rain came down and washed the heart out of the French, if there had been any in them from the first. Gradually the forts, as the infantry retreated into their rear, gave up firing, after having thrown in the course of the morning over 100 shells into the fragments of the village of Noisseville. The fire gradually died away to the south, and about 2 P.M. came the order for the reserves and the artillery to return to quarters, and for the outposts to be reinstated in their old positions.

The rain which quenched the ardour of the French lasted with scarcely any intermission for forty-eight hours, and made its impression on the health of the besieging army. Bronchitis and diarrhœa were the chief complaints engendered; typhus, which soon after became almost an epidemic, now first gained serious head. One saw waggon load after waggon load of sick men going down to Courcelles. Much might have been done, that was not done, both by German organisation and by those other organisations set on foot through the liberality of nations sympathising with human suffering, to ease the hardships of those poor fellows. It would not have been difficult to have organised a cheap and serviceable ambulance service to have accommodated both sick and wounded. Around Metz, in the third line, there are everywhere practicable roads. District depôts might easily have been established, one, say, at Ste. Barbe,

another at Olgy, a third somewhere behind Sennecourt, and a fourth at Gravelotte. To these depôts might have been consigned the sick and wounded Germans from the several regiments and brigades — the poor fellows whom I saw making long weary journeys to Courcelles, in springless country carts or on foot. Between each of these depôts there might have been a continuous service of vehicles resembling elongated Irish jaunting cars. Such vehicles are the true pattern of an ambulance. They would hold a man on either foot rest slightly broadened, two more on the seats, and one above the well in the centre. Four poles at each corner, with a tarpaulin, would make an efficient protection from the weather. Thus, by easy stages, and resting at intervals in the depôts, the sick and wounded might have been brought down in ease and comfort to Courcelles, whence the trains were ready to convey them to Germany. These hospital trains were the most complete things of the kind I had ever seen. The carriages were built on the American model, with entrance at either end. There were two tiers of beds down each side, three in each tier, and the beds had every appliance calculated to give comfort to the occupants. One carriage was devoted to the purposes of a laboratory, another formed a living and sleeping room for the volunteer attendants, and a third was a kitchen. To a callousness for suffering, which must be characterised as general, there were two ex-

ceptions which must be named. One was the German depôt at Courcelles, of which Baron Von Kramm was the life and soul, and which did an immensity of good without pretension. The Baron himself was one of the most energetic men I have ever met, and wrought day and night with the supremest contempt for the good things of this life. The other exception was the branch of the English ambulance, which had its head-quarters in Remilly, under the control of Mr. Austin Lee, a young gentleman endowed with unquestionable administrative talent and great energy; he was ably supported by his assistant, Captain Norman, and within the sphere of my own observation accomplished much really good work.

On the 11th, a French deserter from Metz was brought into Retonfay; he belonged to the 59th of the Line, and to the Army Corps of which Marshal Lebœuf had the command. His regiment, along with two others, was lying, he reported, on the slope on which stands the village of Vantoux, a little behind Mey. He told us that his desertion was a matter of arrangement with a large body of the soldiery. Lots had been drawn who should make the first attempt, and if the experiment succeeded, the others were to desert likewise. He dodged along the verge of the Bois de Grimont, and then came sneaking through the vine-bergs till he reached the German *Feldwache* behind Nouilly. Many Frenchmen were observed apparently watching his

career. The man was an Alsatian, as, he said, were most of the men of his regiment, and he spoke German well. He said the French soldiers lying around Metz were tired of their lives. Nominally, the force to which he belonged lived under canvas, but the stench in the tents was so strong, by reason of cutaneous diseases among the men, that almost all slept in the open air. This for several days before must have been tantamount to sleeping in a water-butt. The skin disease was chiefly of a scorbutic character, caused by the want of vegetables, the absence of salt, and the almost exclusive living on horse-flesh. The poor fellow's mouth and face were in a very bad state from scurvy. He stated that numbers of his fellows were similarly affected. The spirit of disaffection was, he reported, almost universal; even the Guards were tainted with it. Since the defeat of the 7th the troops had positively refused to make any more sorties, and it was with difficulty that the officers could prevail on the men to go upon outpost duty. Of bread, the deserter said, there was considerable scarcity, and the quality was bad; the quantity of rice served out was a tea-cup full per day between two men. This, with the bread, was all the food besides horseflesh the men had. They had eaten the horses of several cavalry regiments, and were now masticating battery horses.

Confined to quarters for several days, by an accident

which befel me on the 10th October, I had leisure to note that inattention to sanitary conditions, which was the weak point in the otherwise almost perfect organisation of the German army. The French inhabitants around Metz were outer barbarians in this respect. The hamlet of Tully Veolan, as described in *Waverley*, was an elysium of cleanliness compared with the little French villages which everywhere dot the territory around the city, and in which were quartered the bulk of the besieging army. Before every door a large and venerable dunghill reeked; in the back cellars, and in the sties immediately behind the houses, dwelt colonies of swine, whose lairs, apparently, had not been purified within the memory of the oldest inhabitant. In dry, warm weather, these dunghills and pigsties impregnated the air with the pungent fumes of ammonia; in wet weather, their ooze percolated everywhere, and was indescribably fœtid. Thus the Germans were the inheritors of nuisances not of their own engendering. But they were by no means behindhand in the race of nuisance manufacturing. The entrails of slaughtered cattle, instead of being collected into one deep receptacle, and there buried deeply after having been strewed with quicklime, were strewed at random around the villages and in the gardens, with a little loose earth thrown over them, through the interstices of which a piece of paunch was often visible; and no disinfectants were

used. Then the establishment of, and the enforcement of resort to, latrines, placed in suitable localities and assiduously disinfected, seemed to be almost wholly neglected, and the consequences were, a state of filth in the immediate vicinity of the houses, to allude to which further would compel the use of plainer phraseology than the reader might stomach. It is quite an erroneous belief that it is important only in warm weather to study sanitary conditions. Cold, raw weather, with fog, opens the pores of the human animal nearly as much as the most relaxing tropical climate, and is far more depressing to the spirits. Open pores, and dulled spirits, are the conditions exactly fitting a man for the reception of malarious particles floating in the air; and a heavy fog, when the ground sweats again, and the air is almost stagnant, is just the atmosphere in which one can hardly move without coming in contact with such particles.

Living as I did, with regimental, as contradistinguished from staff officers, I enjoyed considerable opportunities for estimating the thoroughness of the German system of military training and education. A German general ought to be a good despatch-writer, considering the training in this line which he must have undergone. He began to write despatches as soon as he acquired a separate command, were it only of half a company. The despatch system of the German army is perfect, and the compilation of an accurate and detailed narrative of each

campaign ought to be very easy. Take an instance. From Retonfay, on the morning of the 12th October were transmitted to divisional head-quarters, the despatches from the 4th Regiment, recounting the doings of that contingent in the action of Noisseville, on the 31st of August and 1st of September. The colonel sent in his summary of the manœuvres of the three battalions under his command. The major of each battalion likewise made his report of the proceedings of his own battalion, and every captain or officer in command of a company, also sent forward a succinct statement of his company's doings. These reports were accompanied by a chart on a large scale, showing the positions of the regiment at various periods of the battle, and drawn in this instance by a young lieutenant of our mess, the most accurate and rapid military topographist I have ever known. To be a practical draughtsman is imperative with every German officer. The puzzle with me was to find out what accomplishment is not imperative. The prickles which surround the rose of a commission are many and sharp, and, after all, the rose (at least in a nursery-gardening sense) is no great thing. Take the case, for instance, of my own especial comrade in the 4th, which presented no exceptional features. He came to the regiment from the gymnasium, in the capacity of avantageur. An avantageur is neither more nor less than a private soldier who aspires to a commission.

On joining he had to pass an examination to demonstrate his general scholarship. For twelve months he served in the ranks, rising meanwhile to the non-commissioned rank of Vicefeldwebel, and then he went for a year to the military school. On leaving this, he had to pass an examination on everything relating to the art military, and then he came back to the regiment as a Degen fähnrich, that is to say, as the wearer of a sword without commissioned rank, for six months longer. The officers of the regiment then voted him eligible for a commission, and expressed their readiness, by the same vote, to accept him as a comrade and a credit to the service; this step being an indispensable prelude to a commission. Whereupon the King was graciously pleased to sign his commission as second lieutenant, a rank which he had contentedly held for six years, and may hold still, for aught I know to the contrary. He wore the medals for 1866; he had commanded the company for the last two months, because his seniors had been killed off; he was looking forward with hope to be a premier lieutenant in the course of another year, and a captain in perhaps ten more. His pay in war-time was about 11*l.* 10*s.* a month, in peace he had not much more than about half as much. And he was a thoroughly contented, even-minded, German gentleman, proud of the service, proud that he bore a commission in it, very hungry for the Iron Cross, fond of fun, and fonder still of work and

fighting. I have simply cited him as a typical example; his fellows were as like him as peas. Who would not like to see a few peas of such a pod in the British army?

Reluctantly obliged to quit the front, as the result of the accident already alluded to, I spent the time from the 14th to the morning of the 18th invalided in Saarbrück. Having partially recovered, and reaching Remilly early in the forenoon of the 18th, I found ready to start five fourgons belonging to the English Ambulance Company. These were about to start for a journey round Metz, and I had the opportunity afforded me of a seat in one of the carriages. Our journey to Corny lay behind the foreposts through a chain of villages in the rear of the great bulk of the Prussian regiments in the south of Metz. As we passed Pontoy we emerged on the upland plateau lying to the south of Forts Queleu and St. Privat, and before us to the north lay those sulky-looking fortresses which refused to be enlivened even by the rays of the afternoon sun which fell full on their sullen sides. St. Privat was speaking with its great guns, firing in the direction of the Moselle, but close to us lay a German field battery in utter quiescence, sure token that nothing of importance was going on. At dusk we reached Corny, and applied to the Etappen Commandant for quarters. His answer was an imperative suggestion of the same character as that which the Gardes Mobiles made to Mr. Malet on his way

from Paris to Meaux. We had no resource but to sleep under the beautiful stars. They were fortunately in our case visible, and we bivouacked not uncomfortably in an orchard outside the town, which was greatly preferable to finding harbour in any of the houses of Corny, infected as they were to the very ceiling with malignant typhus. A visit for purposes of information to the fine old château occupied by Prince Frederick Charles resulted in my being told that the parlementaire which came out a day or two previous had returned into Metz without any definite result, and that it was believed that Metz would now hold out to the bitter end. Further, that there was to be no change in the Prussian tactics. Still "masterly inactivity" was to be the policy, and the intelligence received from Metz of a reliable character was of a nature to indicate that this policy could not possibly, ere long, fail to effect the desired results. Prince Frederick Charles had been suffering seriously from dysentery, and was still far from fully recovered, but he was able to sit his horse, and he had never devolved his functions of commander-in-chief on any substitute.

Corny lies in a trough on the edge of the Moselle, shut out from even a distant view of Metz by two curious conical hills, which are part of the series of which the hill of Mousson and the range of St. Quentin and Plappeville are also summits. The peak nearest the river and also nearest Metz is known as the Mont

St. Blaise. Its elevation is considerable, and its position renders it highly eligible as a look-out station. On its summit there was an observatory, and this observatory I visited on the morning of the 19th, notwithstanding the black looks of those in authority in Corny. The whole hilltop is honeycombed with artificial caves, formed, I suppose, in the old days, when the ruin on the summit was a castle inhabited by some magnate of Lorraine, who from his eyrie here dominated the beautiful plain before him, and the valley of the Moselle. Alongside of this ruin, and at an equal elevation, stands a lonely farmhouse, and in front of it the Germans had erected a wooden look-out post, open toward Metz, and mounted with a very powerful telescope. Not a man could move within the scope of vision that the action was not noted by the officer who constantly sat with his eye at this instrument. A series of telegraph wires from the several head-quarters of the different army corps converged into a little office in the rear of this look-out post, and the intentions of the French were thus known as soon as they proceeded to manifest them by action. The post was occupied by two officers belonging to the Second Army Corps—and they had at their disposal a detachment of soldiers to act as orderlies, messengers, &c. What a glorious view opened out before me as I stood on the little plateau in front of the ruin of the Castle of St. Blaise, and looked Metz-ward! On the left

lay the narrow valley of the Moselle, with the slope of the vinebergs in front of Gorze rising beyond. At our feet, to the left, lay Ars-sur-Moselle, skirted by the railway, with the old Roman aqueduct spanning the Moselle with its antique arches, and the new road-bridge nearer Montigny, where is the junction of the railway lines from Nancy and from Saarbrück. A locomotive was dodging about the junction as I looked down upon it, and right before me stretched the rich and beautiful plain, variegated with green and brown and yellow, according to the tint of the crops and the foliage, and with the great twin tower of the Cathedral of Metz standing up defiantly in its centre. The river wound through the flat in three great stretches: one close under the frowning bulk of Mont St. Quentin, that sulked blackly across at us on the left front; the other twisting in a long half-loop far away to the right. As it seemed immediately under us, Fort St. Privat peeped spitefully out over the poplars surrounding the pretty village and château of Cuvry, and further to my right the grim earthwork front of Fort Queleu showed itself over the plain like a huge beaver-dam. The prospect was vast. Carrying the eye over the spires of the cathedral, I could see to the north of Metz the long link of the Moselle trending eastward toward Olgy and Malroy, and with the powerful telescope in position I could even discern St. Eloy and beyond it the blackened ruins of St. Rémy, Ladonchamps, and Grandes

and Petites Tapes, where on the 7th I had seen the Landwehrmen die in their tracks rather than yield the post they held, although bidden thereto by an overwhelming number of enemies. It may be interesting to give the positions of the hostile forces as seen from this summit, since the status quo then visible was unaltered when the capitulation took place.

To begin at the now well-known Mercy-le-Haut. Opposite this point the French were in force in front of Grigy, from which position they, on the previous night, had burnt the remaining houses of Peltre. Working westward, the French foreposts were in Bevoye, Magny, in front of Montigny, and thence across the Moselle, at Moulins-les-Metz, which had been burnt about a fortnight previously. From Moulins the forepost line ran up toward St. Hubert, between St. Ruffine and Chazelles, hence in front of Scy through the valley close under Mont St. Quentin to Lessy, and thence northward with a slight sweep allowed by Plappeville to Lorry, and thence to Vigneulles and Woippy. The completion of the circle I have already detailed. The German foreposts, commencing from the right, stood at Peltre, and thence westward in front of St. Thiebauldt, and in la Papeterie (opposite Magny). Then there was a sweep comparatively close to Metz, as the Moselle was neared, and the Teuton foreposts stood impudently at Frescaty, whence the sentries must have been able almost to discern the

complexions of the gunners in St. Privat. The line crossed the Moselle to Vaux, considerably in front of Ars-sur-Moselle, and then made a dart forward to Jussy, right under the guns of St. Quentin. Longeau, where there was a battery of 12-pounders, continued the chain to Chatel St. Germain. Across the plateau and the wood of Chatel ran the links of the strong fore-post chain, giving a wide berth to the big guns of Plappeville, behind Lorry, through the Bois de Vigneulles to Saulny, from Saulny, still further north-east, to Villers-le-Plesnois, and so by Norroy to the bloodstained Ladon-champs, and the villages whose names are known in connection with the combat of the 7th, to the Moselle at Maxe.

So much for the positions of the two hostile armies in this portion of the investiture. A few words now as to the position of the French inside their outposts yet outside the town of Metz, the gates of which were sealed to Bazaine's army as rigorously as was the road to liberty. The French had in all, in the environed space and outside Metz, four great lagers or camps. The first and probably the largest was on the slope of Mont St. Quentin, looking toward Mont St. Blaise. I could see the rows of tents athwart and athwart the slope, past the village of Scy, and stretching almost down to Chazelles. Another great camp almost joined the first at Longeville, a village on the west bank of the Moselle, and this lager straggled

up the river margin first to Ban St. Martin, where Bazaine had his head-quarters, and so on to the north as far as Devant-les-Ponts. A third camp was in front of St. Julien, toward Vantoux, Vallieres, &c., concerning which detailed information has already been given. The fourth camp was around Borny and Grigy. Besides those camps of soldiers there seemed two great collections of sick, so far as I could discern through the telescope of the observatory. One of those was placed on the esplanade of the town of Metz, and along the river brink. I saw the sick being carried about on stretchers, and the curtains of the tents looped up to give air to the inmates. Another great sick camp seemed to be on the Island of Sauley, where it was believed the cases of typhus fever were as much as possible isolated.

After quitting Corny on the 19th, our way lay across the river by Noveant, the means of transit being a pontoon bridge. Just outside Corny we came on a graveyard, which the Germans had improvised for the bodies of those who had died in the hospitals there, whether from sickness or wounds. They were burying the dead now in deal coffins, but the coffins were put in the ground with very scant ceremony. I saw a fatigue party putting a couple into a hole, the coffins lying on the grass while the men dug their receptacle.

Gorze was very much changed for the better since the

last time I had visited it in the days of blood. From the summit of the great convent on the hill there still was flying the hospital flag; but under it lay few or no wounded men. The hotel was tenanted by the cheery officers of the staff of Prince Louis of Hesse, who commanded the troops lying in the town, consisting of several regiments of Hessian men, with the lion instead of the eagle on their helmets. The inhabitants had all come back to their houses, and lived not alone on amicable, but seemingly on cordial terms with the stalwart Hessians billeted upon them. Madame of the hotel, who in August had moved about in a stolid apathy of despair, utterly disregarding any questions that might be put to her, and with hardly energy enough to wring her hands, was now blithe and sprightly, moving about briskly in response to the requirements of her numerous guests. The stains that blood had made on the floors were still visible—indelible probably while the boarding lasts, but Madame's despair was much more evanescent, and with her return to good spirits the landlady's instinct of charging stiff prices had returned. In August, when I asked her whether I should pay her anything for the quasi shelter I had had for the night under her roof, she only stared blankly in my face, and I could not get an answer from her. Now, when I asked her whether she could give me a bottle of good wine, she eagerly replied in the affirmative, and placed before

me a really good bottle of Muscat, for which she put on, with a smiling face, the fancy price of twelve francs.

The road from Gorze to Rezonville consists, first of an ascent through a narrow gorge into a corner of the Bois de Vionville, and then it traverses the plain in a line with the close of the battle of Vionville on the 16th of August. On the bleak October forenoon all that we saw in the way of traces of the fights of August were the many graves and occasional heaps of the *débris* of the battle-field. But another sense than that of sight bore testimony to tokens of carnage. Every grave-heap had beside it an eccentric tombstone in the shape of a barrel of chloride of lime; yet, notwithstanding this disinfectant, the taint in the air was unmistakable and indescribably fœtid. In the village of Rezonville were still some of the more severely wounded, and the doctors were heartily glad to see the stores which the English ambulance fourgons contained. At Rezonville the troops were Hessians, belonging to the 7th Army Corps. After a short halt, to enable Mr. Lee to distribute his stores judiciously, we pressed on to Gravelotte, where we were most cordially received by the officers of a battery of artillery quartered there. Afterwards we were permitted to go on to the fore-posts in front of Chatel St. Germain, looking over to Fort St. Julien. The chain of sentries stood just

where it had done on the morning of the 20th of August, looking down into the intervening valley. The French had a large cavalry forepost in the bottom of the valley. On the slope around the pretty village of Scy lay the white tents of the French camp which I had seen on the previous day from the top of Mont St. Blaise. Walking some half a mile in the direction of the Moselle, we came presently on a promontory that juts out into the valley, and commands a view of the whole country. It seemed that at our very feet lay the huge pile of the Cathedral; the tin on its spires flashing up in a watery ray of the morning sun, and the great mass casting a dark shadow across the Place d'Armes. On the Isle of Sauley we could see the "isolated" crawling about the river's edge, and between the ramparts and the great southern camp a locomotive was at work on the railway.

As we walked back from the extreme foreposts we passed many rifle-pits on the crest of the rising ground forming the sentry-line, and also a regularly-constructed battery, with earthworks in front and casemates and magazine in the rear. On the platform were mounted six 12-pounders, and in the rear, near Chatel, were several batteries of field artillery. The 12-pounders looked across at Fort St. Julien in the most impudent manner imaginable, as if to say, "Your fortress exists only on our sufferance; we could blow you to little

pieces with a round or two if we chose, but we prefer leaving you alone, out of our tender mercy." And St. Quentin, on its part, seemed to look across at the 12-pounders with something of a risus sardonicus on its grim grey features.

Returning to Gravelotte, we set out for the completion of our design to make the circuit of the Prussian position. Our road lay past the blackened ruins of Malmaison, in which, on the afternoon of the 18th of August, 200 French wounded were burnt, by shells fired from French guns. The smell in the shell, which was all that remained of a once large mansion, was horrible. The tiles had fallen in and hidden the charred corpses of the miserables who perished in the conflagration; but here and there projected a ghastly blackened hand, or a gartered leg swathed in discoloured red cloth. The place was one vast horrible grave, never to be thought of without a shudder. In a lonely upland valley we came upon the forlorn and ruined hamlet of Champenoise, utterly burnt out, smashed and pounded in all directions with shells, pitted all over with the dents of chassepot bullets, and its precincts full of mounds, below which lay, side by side, defenders and captors. Further to the north, in the rear of Amanvilliers, was a twin battery to the one at Gravelotte, very daintily constructed, and fenced round with *chevaux de frise*, and I rather think some pleasant little surprises in the shape of mines. From

Amanvilliers the road trended away to the left to avoid the entrenchments in the vicinity of the foreposts at Saulny, and presently reached the village of Jerusalem. Lying in a sequestered and somewhat isolated tract, few students of war literature have heard much about this tiny namesake of the great Hebrew city of antiquity. Nevertheless, it was the scene of a terrible conflict on the evening of the 18th of August. It had its Titus in General von Pape, but there was no Josephus to chronicle the episodes of the fray. Yet as eloquently as any pen could have described them were they indicated now by the silent yet expressive grave-tokens sown thickly all round the little spot, whose ruin was so utter that it might, to complete the parallel with its namesake of old, have been sown with salt.

Quitting the plateau lying to the north-west of Fort Plappeville, we drove through a great wood, chiefly of underbrush, and suddenly came out on a bluff overhanging the valley of the Moselle. Our point was just before Feves, and the view was glorious. Moy before us in the valley, one could easily trace the line of the German foreposts stretching across to the river; nearer to Metz again was the French line, and behind it the white tents of the camps, with columns of troops moving about in the interval. We could see the zig-zags of Fort Moselle, and of the enceinte surrounding the town. At Feves, just below us, and in a splendid position, was a battery

of 12-pounders, the same that I had seen speaking to such good purpose on the afternoon of the 7th. Getting down into the valley, we crossed the Thionville road, and struck for the temporary wooden barracks erected on the railway to the right front of Maizières, in which was quartered the Fusilier battalion of the 81st Regiment, which had distinguished itself in Ladonchamps on the night of the 7th. In front of the Baracken was another battery of 12-pounders, and on the other side of Maizières, before the Chateau of Amelange, stood yet another. We crossed the river at Hautconcourt, and came down to Charly in the gloaming. Next morning I quitted my good friends of the fourgons, and struck across for my old comrades of the 4th Regiment, whom I found quartered in Château Gras, a little village some half-mile to the north rear of Retonfay.

Among the "kent faces" that greeted me after my absence I missed one or two whom I had learnt to reckon friends. The adjutant of the battalion, a joyous lad fresh from the schools, a youngster of eighteen summers, had succumbed to the hardships of the situation. The marrow was not "set" in the growing boy's bones, and where seasoned men found it not an easy matter to keep sickness from assailing them with success, the dart had penetrated through his green frame, and he had been compelled to go back to the Fatherland, a shattered veteran ere he had attained his full stature. I missed,

too, another face, that of a lieutenant, whose determination to consider himself well while as yet the fever had not left him, I had respected in one sense, while in another I had deprecated. Wounded in the fight by Noisseville on the 1st of September, he had been sent back to St. Wendel, where in the lazarette fever had laid hold of him. His wound healed, and the fever in part abated, the soldier lusted to be again with his comrades in the forefront of the battle, and he had quitted the lazarette while as yet the dregs of the fever had not been eliminated from his frame. On the day of his arrival he lay beside me on the straw, with the alternate cold and hot fits working their will of him, and then I told him that his return had been premature. My words were made good by the fact that two days after the doctor had peremptorily insisted on his return to St. Wendel, and so he had gained nothing by his enterprise save another strain on his constitution.

A friend had kindly kept for me a little diary of the siege events on this face which had occurred since my retirement to Saarbruck, but they were of so little importance as not to call for reproduction. The only actual sortie made by the French troops, and that in comparatively small numbers, had been on the 16th, in the direction of the Brewery. Of course they were driven back. They could have hoped for nothing else. All the damage they did was to shoot through the chest the Feldwebel of the

6th Company. King Wilhelm had no better non-commissioned officer in all his vast army. Strauss smoked his cigar while the doctor cut the bullet out of his back, the lieutenant beside whom he was shot holding him up while the operation was being performed. Then he quietly squared up his company-book, and counting the money in his hands (the Feldwebel is the pay-sergeant of the company), handed everything over to his successor in right trim, and went away philosophically in the waggon to a lazarette. Deserters had become so numerous as to engender a suspicion that there was a design for depleting the garrison by this device, and so eking out the stores of food. A few deserters are useful, and not to be discouraged. Assume that none of them speak the truth; King David tells us that "all men are liars," and yet from our fellow-men's utterances we contrive to extract some grains of truth. In like manner a little wheat can be winnowed out of the chaff of a deserter's farragos, and one or two are acceptable. But now that their name was legion, the order had been issued to receive no more bodies of deserters into the lines, but to send them back whence they came by the powerful argument of the needle-gun. How was it that so many of the deserters were drunk when they came in? Was strong drink on tap in the outposts round Metz, or were the men dosed for the attempt? The latter hypothesis might seem to be borne out by the fact, of which I was

assured, not by French prisoners alone, but by German doctors who had administered to the French wounded, that the French tirailleurs who pushed so boldly to the front at Maizières on the 7th were all full of brandy. Ichabod! Ichabod! How had the glory departed from the French arms when the leaders were compelled to infuse Dutch courage into their soldiers! The French were the readiest to scorn the Russian serf-soldier because, when he came up through the fog wreaths on the morning of Inkermann, his sluggish pulses had been quickened by corn-schnaps. Now, it seemed that they found the same unsoldier-like stimulant requisite in their own case.

I have heard Count Bismarck compared to an elephant's trunk, as one for whom nothing was too great or too small. But Bismarck was not the only German in this war who looked after all little matters as well as the great. I was much amused by an item in one of the orders of the day from Prince Frederick Charles's head-quarters. It was to the effect that whereas an unprincipled rascal of a Hamburg cigar merchant had been selling boxes of cigars to the troops, the upper tier of which consisted of good weeds while the lower ones were unmitigated trash, the military authorities of any place where this astute gentleman should present himself, were enjoined to lay hold of him and transmit him to the head-quarters at Corny. At such an entry

one may smile, but I defy him to refrain from respecting the all-pervading care and watchfulness which took cognisance of such a matter as this. In such care and watchfulness lay the root of much of the Prussian success. A campaign is not made victorious by dint of fighting alone; success more than half depends on efficient organisation, even as regards seeming trifles.

Château Gras must have been a beautiful village before the tide of war came and strewed sand and shingle over its charms. A fine old chateau is the principal building in it, the noble garden of which had been very little injured, while the furniture had also suffered very little. In a room on the ground floor the books still stood on the long ranges of shelves upon the wall. So careful were the Germans to prevent injury to property that on the door of every room occupied by them was pasted an inventory of its contents, for which the successive occupants were held responsible, just as in a barrack at home. The chateau till lately had been a large Feldlazarette, occupied by the wounded of the fights before Noisseville of the 31st of August and 1st of September. The smell of the chloride of lime was still so powerful in the beautiful rooms that some of the officers preferred more modest quarters in the houses of the village. When the owner of the chateau came back he must have shuddered at the legacy the war had left him. Of

the wounded in the great lazarette, not a few had succumbed before the grim king of terrors. In a quiet corner of the garden, looking out through the trees on to St. Julien, St. Quentin, les Bottes, and the great towers of the cathedral in the centre of the plain, is a graveyard, where lie those who died of their wounds in the lazarette. It is prettily enclosed with a wooden paling. The one great grave, over 100 yards in length, is banked up with green sods, and the surface trimly raked. It is flanked up by a great wooden cross bearing the simple inscription :—"Hier ruhen 285 Preussische und 5 Französische tapfere Krieger." There are besides several graves of officers, which are adorned with box-wood crosses planted in the soil and with wreaths of immortelles.

By the 25th of October the symptoms grew more and more pronounced of a speedy ending to the siege, apart altogether from the accounts of negociations which we had from line to head-quarters. On the night of the 24th I had a conversation with a deserter whose information seemed of considerable exactitude and apparent truthfulness. He spoke of a rapid and continuous diminution in the rations served out to the troops, and of increasing irregularity in the supply. Eight days back the bread ration had been half a pound a day for each man; now it was reduced to four ounces, and there was difficulty in procuring this morsel. The man under-

stood that the Imperial Guards who lay around Bazaine at Ban St. Martin, received rather more food than the other troops, and they were used by reason of their superior discipline and their greater contentment as a means of keeping in some semblance of order the line regiments. To each peloton a live horse was given per day, but the man described the brutes as consisting of little else than bones and hide. There can be little wonder that the number of sick was greatly on the increase under such circumstances. Out of 800 men of which this man's battalion consisted, 200 were sick and unfit for duty. Those who were nominally able men were, he said, in a state of great weakness, and certainly his own appearance corroborated this statement.

Various statements appeared to have been made within the last day or two by the French generals to their troops, to keep them from falling into utter despondency. Another deserter brought out a cock and bull story about a general order, to the effect that the Empress was to arrive in Metz on the 25th, and to assume the supreme power, and that then on the next day the whole army was to march away to the north by permission of the Germans. The authorities seemed to interpret these and kindred statements as giving intimation of a sortie in force towards the north on the 26th. The line to the north of Metz on both sides of the river was accordingly

greatly strengthened, and the troops in the third line all round were called out at five o'clock in the morning of that day, in positions enabling them to act efficiently as reserves and supports for the first and second lines. These precautions were no doubt wise, yet on the face of things it seemed that a sortie was physically impossible. It had rained with hardly any intermission for three days, and was still raining. Except where the macadam of the chaussées afforded a hard bottom under the mud, it was impossible to traverse the country on foot. One floundered helplessly in the slippery stuff till he got to a deeper place than usual, and then had to struggle vehemently to prevent himself from sticking outright. No regiment could have kept its formation in ground so holding; and to move artillery or train, except on the macadamised roads, must have been utterly impossible. Following the caution of the Germans, I rode round early to Malroy to be on the ground, if anything, contrary to my belief, should take place; but the alarm, as I had anticipated, turned out to be false.

The 26th October was a great day with us in Château-Gras. Metz had not quite capitulated. There had been no sortie. The rain was coming down unceasingly, and the country was one huge slush. But nevertheless, I repeat, it was a great day with us. It was our doctor's birthday, and there was no reason why we should not keep it, while the generals were finishing the more

serious business. Our doctor was a man unknown to fame, but he deserved it more than many a man who has earned it. He was of the fighting jolly style of medico; although his business was to cure wounds, he had no objection, but the contrary, to cut out work for himself. If you had met him in Cork, you would unhesitatingly have set him down as a native, with his merry black eyes, wide laughing mouth, and—how shall I put it delicately?—his nose with the Hibernian bend. And it was the birthday of this excellent fellow.

I could not make out in the morning why *appel* was hurried over so rapidly; but I was soon to learn. The adjutant tucked my arm under his, and marched me off into the chateau. Of the *salle* the officers had made a mess-room, and it was into this fine apartment that the adjutant guided me about ten o'clock in the morning. We were one and all, it seemed, the guests of the doctor on this the anniversary of his natal morn. Nor was the doctor hospitable without the means. A certain good lady, calling him husband, and dwelling in Königsberg, had not forgotten the day, and, as a birthday present, had sent her good man a great chest. The sum total of the contents of that chest, the world through me can never know. The enumeration I heard indeed, but I lost the tally when the doctor was about half through with it. Suffice it to say that the table groaned under a load of delicacies. I had seen a tele-

gram from Berlin, to the effect that the troops before Metz were living on mutton. The telegraphist would have opened his eyes had he dropped in this morning. There was Schinken and boiled ham, there was a German sausage, as big as the good heart of the doctor's wife, there was a snug little barrel of sardellen, pickled with bay leaves; there was German gingerbread and rusks; there was fresh butter, and there was compot of plums, and I don't know what all else. Then, for drink, there was the choice of Malaga and claret, rum, brandy, Hamburg bitters, and absinthe, and a hearty welcome to season all. We had a curious way of eating in the foreposts, what may be styled, a miscellaneous manner of feeding. Sausage, gingerbread, sardines, and compot, were seen on one plate at once, and served to season one another in a very impartial way. I don't think the doctor could reasonably have complained of the appetites which were brought to his feast. He had one appetite of which he could have had no anticipation. Just as we were in the middle of the feast, a miserable devil of a French deserter was brought in from the foreposts. I never before saw the wolfish glare of absolute hunger darting from a man's eyes. Wet, dirty, half-rotten, seemingly from scurvy, with puffed lips, and hollow cheeks, this gaunt spectacle of a man devoured the food with his great staring eyes. He could not reply to any questions, so concentrated was he upon his gaze at the meaty ham-

bone, and when the Hauptmann threw it to him, it positively made one shudder to see the dog-like style in which he fell a-worrying of it. When all, including, I hope, the poor wretch in the lobby, had eaten their fill, the senior Hauptmann called for full glasses, and in a neat speech proposed the doctor's health. The doctor was very waggish in his reply. He suggested we should dedicate a bumper to St. Julien and les Bottes, because they had been courteous enough not to intervene to the detriment of the crockeryware, and expressed, further, a fervent wish that Bazaine were making one of the company. By twelve o'clock the doctor was drunk out—that is, his stores were—but a happy thought struck a lieutenant concerning a barrel of beer which he had in his room. This was fetched, and its contents went the way of the doctor's stores.

As we broke up, I heard the word go round that there would be a "picnic" in the evening. One is apt to associate the idea of a picnic with leafy glades, blue muslin, bad champagne, and lobster salad. None of these *agréments* had we in Château Gras. The rain was falling fast, the winter wind was blowing bitterly, and the idea of a picnic seemed about as wild as would have been the suggestion of an oratory. But nevertheless the "picnic" came off, although not quite according to my preconceived notions of this institution. It was an indoor picnic; in point of fact, it took place in the hall

where the doctor gave his breakfast. It was on the mutual co-operation principle—everybody was expected to bring something. My contribution was a box of sardines, a lump of butter, and a bottle of rum. I am afraid this was not quite up to the general mark; but what I had I gave—I could no more. I stood in the lobby awhile, watching the arrivals and their several contributions. One Hauptmann was accompanied by his servant carrying half-a-dozen of red wine, a lieutenant had a leg of mutton and a bag full of sugar under his cloak. The hall looked quite civilised. On the great round table in the centre stood an actual moderator lamp, with a painted shade atop of it, its pedestal resting on a mat. Talk of war times, here was refinement with a vengeance. A great wood fire blazed cheerfully on the hearth, and the glasses—somewhat nondescript in shape and size, it is true—sparkled on the board. After a brief pause, the first service of tipple was brought in, contained in a white soup tureen and an antique china vase. The drink was very good. I regret being unable to furnish the recipe for its composition. I may state, however, that among the ingredients were red wine, white wine, rum, cognac, schnapps, cloves, and cinnamon; of the proportions of each I could learn nothing. I incline to the opinion that a "stock" pot with the red wine was put on, and, as contributions came in, that they were emptied into the pot promiscuously.

For about two hours conversation, alternated with story-telling, was the order of the evening. The talk fell once upon the causes of the French defeats, and after various explanations had been started, a sententious premier lieutenant, who had not previously opened his mouth, struck in with this original illustration and very sound theory:—"The chief rabbi of the Dantzic Jews had taken a new house, and his flock determined to stock his wine butt for him. An evening was set apart for the affair, and one after another the Jews went down into the cellar, and emptied each his bottle into the big vat. When the rabbi came next day to draw off his dinner wine, he found there was nothing in the cask but water. Each and every Jew had said to himself, that one bottle of water could never be noticed in so great a quantity of wine, and all acting up to this, the rabbi had not got a drop of wine in his butt. Now it was just the same with the French army. One soldier said to himself that it would not matter a copper if he sneaked away—in so great a multitude he would not be missed. But the devil of it was, that one and all took this line of reasoning, and the result was that nobody was left to look our battalions in the face." Everybody laughed at the premier lieutenant's quaint illustration, and then we had a stand-up supper at the sideboard. That finished, singing was the order of the evening. It surprised me not a little when one of the officers struck up "My

heart's in the Highlands," and almost all were able to chime, not alone with the tune, but the words. The doctor treated us to a composition of his own, composed to illustrate passing events, for the burden of it was—"The Bois de Grimont oh!" The Bois de Grimont was the wood out of which the French sharp-shooters so persistently peppered away at our foreposts. Encouraged by the success of this effort, he gave us another song *pour l'occasion*, the chorus of which mixed up "Mercy-le-Haut," and "Ter Teufel," in some mysterious manner. It may interest the British music-hall patrons to know that a translation of "The Captain with the whiskers" is one of the chiefest favourites with the German officers. They rattle away at its lively chorus with great delight. We had it to-night over and over again. At ten o'clock the "stock" pot being empty, we broke up with great joviality, and betook ourselves each unto his respective straw.

CHAPTER II.

PUCELLA RAPTA.

After all our long waiting from day to day in anticipation of the capitulation of Metz, that event came upon us with a strange suddenness. It had only been a few days previously that it was mentioned in the general orders from head-quarters that the negotiations had been definitively broken off; and when men heard this they set their teeth hard, and prepared for another spell of waiting, variegated with fighting. But there had been symptoms of the end being imminent in the haggard deserters who came among us from day to day, with their longing looks at our black bread and flesh. Orders had been issued to the railway people in Saarbrück to have material in readiness for repairing the railway communication direct into Metz; and this was another symptom. But still, when the report ran round the regiment, on the afternoon of the 27th, that the capitulation had actually been negotiated, some found it difficult to realise the fact—confirmation was wanting. It was true that the day before the

generals commanding the several army corps had been summoned to Frescaty by an order of Prince Frederick Charles, and that some of us had the "straight tip" under promise of the profoundest secrecy; but everything looked so much in the ordinary way, that people could not realise the fact of the capitulation. Men went on the field watch as usual, and the confronting foreposts still continued to exchange shots. No white flag was visible, and the unbelieving Thomases of the 4th shrugged their shoulders, and would have none of the tidings. But general orders are convincing arguments, and even the unbelieving Thomases took to clapping their hands and capering, when the news came under the sign manual of the chief of the staff.

At twelve o'clock on the forenoon of the 28th each of the outlying fortresses was taken possession of by two battalions of German infantry, a squadron of cavalry, one heavy battery without tumbrils, 100 artillerymen with the complement of officers, and an engineer detachment. The following is the apportionment of the force of occupation. The troops occupying

St. Quentin	were found by		18th Infantry Division.
Plappeville	,,	,,	3rd Army Corps.
St. Julien	,,	,,	1st Army Corps.
Queleu	,,	,,	8th Army Corps.
St. Privat	,,	,,	Hessian Division.

At the same hour a battalion of the 7th Army Corps marched forward, and took possession of the Porte

Serpenoise, one of the gates of Metz, and another battalion from the same corps occupied the Porte Moselle. Two hours before the occupation of the forts, I should observe, there were sent forward from each of the occupying detachments an artillery officer and a small body of under officers, accompanied by engineers, to take over the powder magazines and the respective forts, and they sent out the report to the effect that all was in order before the troops were allowed to march in. This precaution was no doubt dictated by a recollection of the catastrophe at Laon.

It was in orders that at one o'clock on the 28th the French army should formally lay down its arms. By reason of the confusion which reigned everywhere this disarmament was protracted and piecemeal, a large proportion of the force not disburdening themselves of the now useless arms till the following morning. There was no set ceremony, yet the affair was imposing from its very simplicity. It was conducted in detail, each corps laying down its arms in the neighbourhood of its own station. I saw several regiments of the 3rd Corps d'Armée —that of Lebœuf—disarm themselves. In straggling masses the men defiled past, piling their arms in great heaps at the word of command from their own officers, who laid down their swords as the men did their chassepots, building quite a little heap of them to the right of the great stacks of rifles. The disarmed French troops

then returned into their bivouacs, which they occupied for one night more, before quitting for other bivouacs round which should stand German sentries. For this last night they preserved a semblance of freedom. The Germans left them to themselves. Except in the forts and at the two gates I have mentioned, not a spiked helmet was to be seen nearer Metz than had been seen a week before. The *Feldwachen* were mounted as usual, the *replis* were established, and the troops stood fast as ever in their long and weary watch around Metz. Indeed, in the course of the night there was a slight skirmish somewhere between Vautoux and Mey, conducted on their own account, as I afterwards learned, by a few men who thought proper to repudiate the capitulation. So late as when I passed Little Belle Croix on the forenoon of the 29th, I heard a few dropping shots on the slope to the right, but whether they were fired in anger I never was able to learn.

On the morning of the 29th October—sombre day for the French arms—the Frenchmen came forth and rendered themselves to their captors—corps by corps, and under the command of their own officers. The 6th Corps (Canrobert's) came from its bivouac by Woippy to Ladonchamps, where on the 7th so many of its members had stained the soil with their blood. Their prison-bivouac was on the plain in the rear of the wrecked and burnt village. The 7th Corps, that of Ladmirault, came

out over the ridge between St. Quentin and Plappeville, and found quarters, inhospitable enough I fear, on the bleak plateau of St. Maurice. The Imperial Guard marched down to Longeville, crossed the railway bridge at Tournebride, passed on to Frescaty to the left, and found their bivouac in the plain between Orly and Augny. The garrison of Metz itself, consisting of about 20,000 men, chiefly of Mobile Guards, marched by Le Sablon, past the ruined village of Magny, and so forward to the outskirts of St. Thiebauldt. The 2nd Corps (Frossard's), with Laveauconfied's division, and the 4th brigade came out past La Posette on the great Strasburg chaussée, and found their bivouac behind the village of Ars Laquenexy. The 3rd Corps (that of Lebœuf) came out among us of the 1st German Army Corps along the chaussée leading to Saarlouis.

Each corps, as it marched out, was received by the German troops covering the respective section of the environment. They were led by their own officers, who formally handed over their men to the German officers, and then they were at liberty to quit their ranks and return to Metz, there to wait the trains which should convey them into captivity across the German Rhine. It should be mentioned that their parole was accepted from none of the officers of the army of Metz, a stringency adopted in consequence of the numerous defaults of honour perpetrated by officers released on parole after

having been made prisoners. The men under the command of their under-officers were then marched out to the bivouac places, which had previously been partly prepared, wood for fires having been collected and a supply of provisions being ready for distribution.

I was with the 1st Army Corps when it took up its position to receive the corps of Lebœuf. From all the villages around, the villages inhabited for so many weary weeks, the villages made memorable by fights, by burnings, by graves, by sickness, and by deaths, streamed the regiments on to the chaussée. There had been much rain during the night, and although the sun broke out about ten o'clock, the watery haze hung about the bottoms of the valleys and the mud splashed as the troops strode through it. Mud! why we had had nothing but mud for weeks, and should we mind it now, looking at the errand on which we are bound? No. The "Wacht am Rhein" rises lustily from the pioneers in the front, and the regiments as they come down the side roads catch up the strain. On we go past the Brewery, with the grenade pits, the graves, and the entrenchments around it—itself a mere heap of shattered bricks—on to the gentle slope behind the village of Lauvallière. Then right and left wheeled the heavy columns, leaving the chaussée open, and a parallelogram of about 100 feet in width on each side of it. In front of the Brewery stood the artillery, before the artillery the serried ranks of brass-spiked helmets all

the way down the gentle slope, almost to Lauvallière. Arms were piled, and there the Germans waited for the advent of the men with which it almost seemed, through the length of time that the armies had confronted each other, that they could claim a kind of personal acquaintance. While the troops waited I pushed forward towards Metz to meet the Frenchmen. Already, it is true, we had plenty of Frenchmen, but they were all civilians, and there were Frenchwomen too, and French children. The road had been opened in the morning, and they came crowding out, the poor creatures who had abandoned their village homes and crowded into the town when the pennons of the Uhlans had shown themselves on the fringes of the villages. On they came, waggon load after waggon load, with their trumpery household goods and their agricultural implements piled on the waggons behind the women and children. They knew not what it was that they had come out for to see. Perhaps they expected to find their cottage homes as they had left them—not roofless, wrecked, utterly ruined, as was the grim reality. Lauvallière seemed to give the first shock to their cheerfulness. Gaunt and grim stood its houses, burnt to the shell, the graves lying all around, the holes in the fields where the shells had burst, the breastworks behind which had stood the German foreposts. As each waggon and each knot of peasants came into Lauvallière there was a halt, and full many a "Mon Dieu!" In

Lauvallière there was a large tannery, which must have employed many workmen, and been an important and profitable concern. It was now a mere shell—not a fragment of the woodwork is left. I chanced upon its owner standing on the bluff over against his property, and gazing upon it in moody silence. Twenty paces farther on I came on a little group, the extreme pathos of which made my heart swell. It was a family, and they sat in front of what had once been their home. That home was now roofless. The stones of the walls were all that was left. The garden was a wreck, and the whole scene was concentrated desolation. The husband leant against the wall, his arms folded, and his head on his chest. The wife sat on the wet ground, weeping over the babe at her breast. Two elder children stared around them with wonder and unconcern—too young to realise the misfortune which had overtaken all the family. The silence of the grief-stricken group was more eloquent than any words. No home, no food, a waggon, and a couple of starved horses, a field with four graves in it. This is the brief summary of the belongings and condition of the family. All were alike; although this family was the one I happened to see, because their home lay on my road in Lauvallière, some similar piteous sight must soon have been visible by every house in every village all around Metz. What need for me to occupy space by writing of what every one with a grain of human sym-

pathy in his composition can picture and mourn for himself?

The stream of *émigrés* continued as I came up the slope on to the flat, on the edge of which lay the improvised fortification of the village of Belle Croix. Belle Croix was ghastly in its utter solitude. Burnt and shattered by German shells, it must nevertheless have been a very strong position. All round the entrenchment across the road, was a moat of some depth. The angles were stockaded, the walls loopholed, and there still stood in position a couple of field guns, which, as the Germans had known to their cost many a time, were located with great skill. Owing to the block caused by the entrenchment the road had been diverted. It had been little enough used before this morning. The grass grew thickly on the chaussée between Lauvallière and Belle Croix. As the peasant waggons came crowding out, they stuck in the heavy mire of this détour, and many were the *sacrés* before they were started again, the lean horses being too weak to pull them through the heavy ground. When I had passed Belle Croix I could not help owning to myself that I had never till then succeeded in forming a proper conception of the real strength of the natural position of Metz. On the right, with a valley intervening like a deep trench, lay the blunt-topped mountain, crowned by Fort St. Julien. On its slope were the bivouac fires of the troops of Lebœuf. Nothing could

venture on this slope—a great natural glacis—so long as Fort St. Julien thought proper to forbid the passage. On my left, also on an eminence, although from the positions whence I had previously seen it, it appeared to be on a flat, lay Fort Queleu, square and massive, dominating the plateau to the left of the chaussée. But this plateau is closed in Metz-ward by a fortification all to itself—the great earthwork of les Bottes, whose grenades had so often burst in disagreeable proximity, and which now stood solitary and empty, with not even a sentry on its earthen summit. Over the top of Fort les Bottes were visible the towers of the cathedral, and the picture was framed in by the background of that great elevated ridge of which the two chief peaks are crowned by Forts St. Quentin and Plappeville.

It was just beyond les Bottes that I met the first French soldier—a cavalryman of the line. The fellow was as drunk as he well could be to be able to move at all. He staggered forward in tacks, dropping his kit piecemeal as he came. At a bend in the road behind Four-à-Chaux, I came upon the head of the prisoner column, marching onward to their reception at the Brewery. The men were in a very miserable state, covered with mud, wet, sodden seemingly, indeed, through and through with wet, many of their faces blotched and scabbed with scurvy, and quite one-third in a state of drunkenness. Not a few were in a state of

bestial drunkenness, their clothes disarranged, and decency utterly disregarded. A little farther on, and right and left, lay the great bivouac before Fort Belle Croix. The troops were being collected by their officers in pelotons previously to being marched out, and several columns were already converging on the great chaussée. As each body got the order to go forward a cheer came from the slovenly and dislocated ranks, and from the columns on the march there broke out at intervals a fitful chorus of some lively marching song. Most of the officers were grave, taciturn, and downcast. Surely they must have despised the reckless throng which they nominally commanded. The men obeyed their officers and regarded the sound of the bugle after a fashion, but it was evident that they were utterly unaffected by the catastrophe which had befallen the arms of their country, and were eager only to get somewhere where a full meal of victuals awaited them. Poor wretches, after all it is not fair to be too severe on their disorganisation. How near actual starvation they had come to before their leader would give up the game, their faces pale through the dirt of days, their lean frames with the rags hanging about them, told far more powerfully than protestations, and were the most convincing reply to the easy untruths of those who would have had Europe believe that Metz was betrayed.

Passing the columns of prisoners at a canter, I was

back again before the Brewery ere the front of that column had reached the place where stood the Germans waiting for them. The dismounted cavalry came first, followed by the artillery; last of all came the infantry of the line. The cavalry seemed to have lost all self-respect; they greeted the Germans with cheering, and several men broke from the ranks and slouched forward through the mud with intent to salute with a spirituous kiss the German officers standing in front of their companies. It was curious to notice the opposite idiosyncrasies of the two nationalities. Grave and stern stood the German victors, with, as it seemed, a silent pity rather than contempt for the demented tatterdemalions who proffered them the undesirable greeting; while the Frenchmen chattered and gesticulated, "sacréd" and spluttered, sang and laughed, as they slouched through the gauntlet of humiliation. The officers quitted their commands as each reached the alley fringed by the German battalions, and returned to Metz or the vicinity. The prisoners, comprising the whole of the 3rd Corps, till the day before under the command of Lebœuf, and numbering about 23,000 men, were escorted to a position between Château Gras and Retonfay, where was fixed the site for their bivouac. The guards for the French prisoners were contributed in rotation by the several divisions. The daily quota for the bivouac at Château Gras was four battalions of infantry, one battery

of artillery, and one squadron of cavalry. In command of it had been placed Colonel von Deitzen Hennig, of the 4th regiment, his adjutant being Lieutenant von Verzin. Food had been collected for the supply of the prisoners, who had, of course, to bivouac in the open air. From the 30th daily drafts, each 3000 strong, were despatched toward Germany *viâ* Saarbrück and Saarlouis. In all the capture consisted of 173,000 men, including three marshals, forty-seven general officers, and 6000 regimental officers. General Kummer, the general in chief command of the Landwehr, was appointed interim Commandant of Metz. General von Kastrow took the control of all arrangements connected with the transport of the prisoners and the quartermastership generally of the district around Metz and as far as Thionville. The German troops which had formed the besieging army were not, it was arranged, to enter the town, except when marching through. Metz was, with the forts, in the meantime, to be garrisoned by the Division Kummer and the 7th Army Corps. The circle of environment was, however, greatly reduced in size from the day after the surrender. The 2nd Army Corps drew inward to Montigny. The 8th came on to Magny, the 10th to Woippy. The 18th infantry division, charged with the custody of the Imperial Guard, lay now at Longeville, Moulins les Metz, St. Ruffine, and Longeau. The 1st Army Corps came forward closer under the wing of St.

Julien. The foreposts were still to be maintained, the chain of communications being kept up just as in the old days. It was anticipated that by seven days all the prisoners would have been sent away.

After I had seen Lebœuf's command taken over by the 1st Army Corps, I returned towards Metz, meeting on my way a stream of straggling soldiers who had missed their corps, and were staggering out under loads of tents, blankets, and what not. The environs of the town were very desolate and very filthy. Mud, raw horseflesh, burnt-out bivouac fires, huts made of the branches of trees, old women, and skeleton horses, were the leading characteristics. There was no difficulty in getting into the town, where I found the shops all open, but with no great show of edibles. Meat hung in the butchers' shops, although it was chiefly, if not altogether, horse; the cafés were crowded, and there appeared no exhaustion in the stocks of the shops devoted to the sale of any material. Tobacco was plentiful, wine, spirits, and liqueurs in great abundance. Making my way to the Hôtel de l'Europe, I found it crowded with French officers, and I also found there one Englishman, Dr. Ward, of the International Society for the Succour of the Wounded, who had just been decorated by the French military authorities for his attention to the wounded; and two Americans, Dr. Good, of the same society, and who had also been decorated; and Mr.

Eustis, a commercial gentleman, who had spent forty-eight days of the siege in prison under suspicion of being a spy. The spy mania had raged very strongly in Metz. Seventy-eight persons were arrested on suspicion in one day. Eight in all I was told had been shot as convicted spies, including the notorious Shieull, to whose adroitness and accurate information the French believe Von Moltke was indebted for his knowledge of the weakness of the French dispositions on the frontier, and for the hint which he utilised into the successes at Wörth and Weissenburg. The following is a statement of the tariff of prices for food ruling in Metz three days before the capitulation, supplied by the manager of the Hôtel de l'Europe :

Beef	8 francs per lb.
Horseflesh	10 centimes to 2 francs per lb.; "choice horse," the tender loin, fetches the latter price.
Eggs	1 franc each; have been 1f. 20c.
Fowls	20 francs each.
Pike (fish)	8 francs per lb.
Coffee	6 francs per lb.
Ham	8 francs per lb.
Cheese	40 francs per lb. (nominal, all done.)
Salt	5 francs per lb.
Geese, fat	65 francs per pair paid yesterday.
Oats	120 francs per sack of 200lb.
Chocolate	5 francs per lb.
Bread	White, none since 16th October; brown, 4½ sous per lb.
Mutton	None for two months.
Wine	Plentiful, and old prices maintained; bottle of champagne for 7 francs.

Notwithstanding these extraordinary prices, the tariff

in the Hôtel de l'Europe was much the same as usual. I dined there in the evening at the *table d'hôte* for seven francs, including half a bottle of wine. Breakfast was *à la carte*, about seven francs; bottle of champagne, seven francs. We had four courses for dinner, the waiter said none were horseflesh, and it is not seemly to call even a waiter a liar. The room was crowded with French officers. I dined at the same table with Colonel Michel Ney, a nephew of the historical Marshal. He had received some half-dozen sabre-wounds in the cavalry fight at Vionville, and was only half recovered. At the same table also sat General Duplessis, a French officer of distinction, who also had been severely wounded. In the evening there was a tremendous rush of German officers into the hotel, and quarters became impossible at any price. Forty officers were sent bedless away from the Hôtel de l'Europe, and I was indebted to a good-hearted American for half his bed. The French and German officers fraternised a little in the *salle* after dinner. At first the Frenchmen were a little inclined to be sulky and reserved, but the heartiness of the Germans soon thawed the ice, and the champagne promoted the flow of kindly feeling. I was told that in the forenoon, when the officers of the Imperial Guard said adieu to their men, profuse tears were shed by both. There was no such emotion manifested by Lebœuf's corps.

In the afternoon of the 28th, when the news of the

capitulation was made known, there had been a sort of revolutionary riot in Metz. The National Guards made a display of refusing to give up their arms, ran to the Place d'Armes, where they congregated in large numbers and several shots were fired. The cathedral rang the alarm bell and the shops put their shutters up. The editor of one of the ultra journals was the ring-leader; mounted on a white horse, with a pistol in his hand, and others in his belt, he hounded on the mob to yell for Bazaine's blood. That distinguished person, however, with great discretion, remained in his quarters in Ban St. Martin. The mob, composed in a large proportion of civilians, laid hold of an officer of the Imperial Guard, and holding pistols at his head, forced him to carry in the front the Republican flag. A hint from the mayor that the Germans would be sent for to put down the disturbance had its effect after the gamins had roared themselves hoarse shouting "Vive la République!"

It seemed it had not been until ten days before the capitulation that the troops of Bazaine's army were forbidden to enter the town of Metz. Up till then they had circulated freely in the town, using the cafés, and spending their money in the shops. Until six days before it, a ration of bread of 100 grammes had been issued to each soldier. Since then they had had no rations, except horseflesh. The townspeople had been on bread rations as well as the

troops, the rations consisting of 200 grammes of brown bread. Those who were able paid for their ration, the poor receiving it gratuitously. It surprised me that Metz had been able to hold out so long. The place had not above 50,000 inhabitants, if so many, and with no previous warning it had supported for seventy days a gross population of 230,000 mouths. These are the official figures. The dearness of provisions had been progressive. For instance, on the 16th of August butter had already reached the fancy price of 4f. per pound. On the same day chickens ranged from 6f. to 8f. At the date of the capitulation, butter could not be procured at any price, and the same might be said of chickens. Metz had certainly not capitulated for want of munitions of war. The fortress had ample supplies still left. Although Metz was an arsenal, no manufacture of cannon or projectiles had gone on during the siege. There had been no occasion for any such work, and if there had, the want of coals would have presented an insuperable obstacle. Powder had, however, been made in large quantities. All the coal used in Metz comes from Saarbrück, and there had recently been great scarcity—so much so that an order had been issued a week before the capitulation that the gas in the town should be extinguished at seven o'clock, under a heavy penalty. Candles were plentiful, and the deprivation was therefore not so seriously felt.

Of sick there were altogether, in and around Metz,

on the date of the capitulation, about 20,000 soldiers, of which about 9000 were wounded men. The latter had chiefly been wounded in the sorties. Of the wounded in the battles of Courcelles and Gravelotte most were either recovered or dead. Very many mutilated men were to be seen in the streets. Latterly almost every operation had ended fatally. Pyæmia, hospital gangrene, and typhus had their sway on frames previously debilitated by hardship and famine. Of hospital stores the greatest lack was in the matter of leeches. For two of these Dr. Ward had on the previous day paid 180 francs. His colleague was down with brain fever, and he paid this wildly fancy price to save his life.

Three or four newspapers continued to be daily printed in Metz up to the capitulation. Since no outside information had reached the town for so long, the newspapers had chiefly concerned themselves with local gossip, hopes, fears, and canards. A file of one of them was a curious sight. The stock of paper had long run out, and the journals had been printed one day on red paper, another on blue, a third on buff, and so on—advertisement placard paper having necessarily been had resort to. The last issue of one journal was printed on brown packing paper.

All the afternoon of the 29th, the division of General Kummer came pouring into the town, with bands playing and colours flying. The great Landwehrmen stared

around them with undisguised curiosity at the nut which they have found so hard to crack. The townsfolk jabbered among themselves as the troops defiled, and there were not a few scowling faces. What cared the Landwehrmen for the scowling faces? From the slush and mire of Maizières and Ladonchamps they had come into a reasonable prospect of beds and bottles of wine. They were quartered for the most part in the Caserne du Génie, the Hôtel de Ville, and other public buildings. The officers were in private houses. Ye gods! with what zest did they devote themselves to champagne in the *salle* of the hotel! Generals, lieutenants, Vice-feldwebels, all in the lump were there, and one and all speaking after the German manner, at the top of their voices—the din was deafening. The French officers cleared off early to bed, all save two, who sat on moodily in a corner, pulling their moustaches and drinking absinthe—the poison that has sapped the virility of the French army.

Some officious patriots had made themselves busy during the night of the 28th, with the statue of Marshal Fabert in the Place d'Armes. When capitulation was first mooted, a wreath of immortelles and laurel was woven round his head, and a flag stuck in his hand. On the morning of the 29th, the Marshal appeared draped in a full suit of crape, with a hole in it, through which was visible the inscription—the words which the gallant Marshal addressed to Louis XIV:

Si pour empêcher qu'une place
que le Roi m'a confiée
ne tombât au pouvoir de l'ennemi,
il fallait mettre à la brêche
ma personne, ma famille et tout mon bien,
je ne balancerais pas un moment à le faire.

Bazaine had not quite the grit in him to act up to the programme chalked out by the staunch old Marshal.

Two or three days elapsed after the surrender of Metz before a regular and reasonably quick postal service was established from the city, and for any one to whom time was an object it was necessary to despatch letters from Courcelles, the interim terminus of the railway. To reach this point I quitted Metz early on the morning of the 30th October, compelled to wriggle now right, now left, to circumvent the numerous entrenchments still blocking up the main roads.

On my way from Colombey to Courcelles my track lay through the prisoner-bivouac of the 2nd French Army Corps (Frossard's). It was a very miserable scene. The fires of the previous night had burnt out, and the morning fires had not been lit. The miserable prisoners lounged about in seeming utter despair, the fine rain wetting them through and through, and keeping soft the mud with which their coats were plastered. Some few had erected tents, but the great mass had spent the night in the open, standing round the fires, for to lie down must have been impracticable. I saw a couple of corpses lying in the ditch by the roadside, and was told that six

or eight poor wretches had succumbed to exhaustion and exposure during the bitter night. If it was any consolation to the prisoners, their German guards were in as miserable a plight as their captives. The chain of sentries posted all round slouched backward and forward on their posts, and the fixed corporal-schafts leaned gloomily on their weapons. In the road in front of Ars Laquenexy a kind of market had been established, but the dealers had hardly waked up under the tilts of the carts. They were marketenders chiefly from the German frontier about Saarlouis, and the bulk of their wares consisted of spirituous liquor. The French prisoners were by no means short of money. All the cash in the bank and military chest in Metz had been disbursed in paying up the troops' arrears of pay, and there were plenty of francs in their pockets.

In Courcelles I saw the arrival of the first column of prisoners to be sent down by the train to Saarbrück. There were 2000 of them, and five trains, each containing the same number, were being despatched every day. Poor fellows, they seemed very miserable, but they bore their misery with a fortitude which filled me with respect. The rain poured down upon them in a deluge as they stood in the road, which was a foot deep in mud, of the consistency of pea-soup. Here they had to wait for about an hour, while the arrangements for their transit were being completed, and it was good to see the courtesy

and quiet fortitude which they manifested. I went among them in the mud. Everywhere the poor fellows stepped aside with a half bow to let me pass. If one accidentally jostled me, the "Pardon, Monsieur," was prompt and warm. I found these French prisoners here as ignorant as those whom I had seen at Sedan. Some of the sergeants asked me for news of the outer world, but the men seemed chiefly concerned to know whither they were going, and what kind of country Germany was. I named several towns as among their probable destination, leading cities of Germany, but very few had more than heard of them, and knew nothing either of their magnitude or of their locality. At last the prisoner-train was ready, some sixty carriages packed as closely as the men could sit or stand. Several open trucks had been brought into requisition, and it seemed to me as though the men were actually stacked upon them, so thickly were they packed. With a whistle the heavy train sluggishly set itself in motion, and away it rolled with its freight of Frenchmen down what was once one of the most charming valleys in France. The Frenchmen were prisoners on their way to expatriation, the valley was a wilderness. On the ramparts of St. Quentin, which from a distance overlooked the scene, paced the square-built men with the brass-spiked helmets. The virgin fortress of France, never till now profaned by the foot of an invader, was held by the Landwehrmen, and the streets of the

town echoed to the clash of the German subaltern's sword.

As I drove out across the glacis of Fort Belle Croix, I was struck with the alteration which had taken place there since the previous day. Then the whole expanse swarmed with life. Cavalrymen, artillerymen, infantrymen, were blended in chaotic confusion, out of which it seemed impossible to evolve order. Now the expanse lay blank and bare. Cavalrymen, artillerymen, infantrymen, had been drafted off it. Nothing was left but the mud and a few horses, too debilitated to be removed, and dropping, even as I passed, into the slush out of which they should never rise. There was a horse market in Metz on the 30th, or rather just outside the gate. I imagine a good many horses changed hands to which the parties who disposed of them would have had some difficulty in proving a valid title. Prices ranged from a franc and a half up to five pounds, but this latter was a fancy price, and only given for an officer's charger of breeding and substance.

After seeing the prisoner-train leave Courcelles, I drove away northward, and after visiting the headquarter staff of the 7th Army Corps at Puche, and my friends of the 4th regiment at Retonfay, went into the lager of Lebœuf's corps on the slope between Château-Gras and Retonfay. It was getting towards evening by this time, and I was in the right time for seeing the Frenchmen

making their preparations for bivouac. What splendid fellows they were to be sure at this kind of work. Already the tents had a drain through each to carry off the surface water. The great poplar trees on the chaussée—those that the Germans had left standing—were falling fast. Those that the Germans had felled the Frenchmen were chopping up into lengths, and carrying off to the bivouac fire. Others stood round the bivouac fires or lay on curious improvised beds, contrived with dexterously-placed stones to keep their constructors out of the mud. In the blaze of the fires were pots and saucepans; rather than part from a saucepan when he has once secured it, I believe a French soldier would lose one of his boots. The pots and saucepans were simmering merrily and emitting a fragrant odour—whence it was derived I could not guess. The rations had been meat and biscuit; nothing else save salt. The men had dug up again the already thrice turned over potato fields and might have got a few tubers. But potatoes, and meat, and biscuits were impotent to create the pleasant odour, one of the recondite mysteries of French cookery.

The atmosphere after the capitulation was full of stories of the prices paid in Metz during the siege for articles of food. Most of these were to be taken *cum grano*, since the beleaguered, now that it was all over, not unnaturally took a pleasure in piling on the agony. But the one which I am going to narrate I had from an

undeniable source, and I give it as illustrative of the profligate frivolity among the wealthier and more aristocratic officers, which has been one of the chief causes of the ruin of the French army. There had been in Metz during the siege a certain lady of the Parisian demi-monde, who had come to Metz when the Emperor came, and could not get away when he retired *viâ* Verdun to Châlons. Two officers of the Garde Impériale had been rivals for this lady's affections. The lady, it seemed, had a fanciful and delicate appetite, and one day in the early part of the last month of the siege she expressed a fervent wish to be regaled on turkey and truffles. "Ah, you know that is an impossibility," was the rejoinder of one of the swains. "I don't know that," said the other, eager for an opening; "I shall try what I can do." The other, in his jealousy, offered to bet 500 francs that he would not succeed, and the wager was accepted. The officer came to the landlord of one of the hotels and gave him the commission, adding that money was no object. The head waiter went on a foraging expedition, and after two days' search brought the officer a turkey and truffles, with a little bill for a thousand francs; so the gay guardsman won his bet and lost 500 francs.

As I was driving out to Courcelles my coachman quietly told me that his wife and three children were starving. When we returned at night I went with him to ascertain the circumstances for myself. He guided

me into a part of the town close to the middle branch of the Moselle, inhabited only by the poorest of the poor. I had before then only been on the top of the crust which overlay the misery caused by this siege. I had dined and eaten dessert, I had called for wine, and lo it was forthcoming. So far as concerned the hotels, the world seemed to wag very much as its wont. I saw no ghastly faces in the streets pallid with want, as were the faces of those citizens of Antwerp, who cheered the lean Stadtholder when he swore to eat his boots before he would surrender. But it was not because there were no pale faces and attenuated forms in Metz that I did not see them in the streets, but because the miserable ones cared not to make a parade of their misery. It was a sorry sight the squalid room of the coachman presented. Of bread the family had not had a morsel for three days; then they had received as ration two pounds for six. One of the six—an infant two years old—wants rations no more. The little body lay on two planks under the window, the victim of bodily exhaustion, from deficient and improper food. How could a child of two years survive on sinewy horseflesh, in scanty quantity, and on a casual morsel of bread, the meal of which was mixed with sawdust and chopped straw to make it eke out? All up and down the poverty-stricken street the wretchedness was much the same. Horseflesh and want of salt had killed off the children like flies. The mor-

tality among the little ones had been frightful. The elder children were covered with blotches and scorbutic sores, caused by want of salt and of variety in their food.

As regards the inhabitants of Metz itself, it seemed likely that the misery would soon come to an end. There was no want of wealth in Metz, and the rich citizens were reported to be public spirited. Now that food could be bought, it was sure to be bought and distributed freely. But no such amelioration was to be expected for the wretchedness—a wretchedness almost without hope—of the villagers inhabiting the country around Metz. They had nothing—not even a roof above them, in the pittiless rain. Of their cottages nought was standing but the bare walls, often pounded with shells. Their gardens were waste, their cattle were gone, their furniture was wrecked, their straw was dung, their fields lay fallow and studded with graves. A day spent in the misery around Metz must have made as water a heart hard as the nether millstone. But help came to the helpless. It will be long ere "the Friends" will cease to be remembered by the simple peasant people whom they helped through the ghastly slough of despond.

The railway into Metz having been opened on the 30th, a convoy of 300 generals and superior officers went off at five o'clock in the afternoon. On the 31st, at 10.30, a train left for Mayence, *viâ* Nancy, for the accommodation of generals and chief staff officers. A

regular series of trains was organised on the 1st of November for regimental officers. The first, leaving at 9.30, accommodated the officers of the garrison; the second, at 1.30, for the officers of the Imperial Guard, cavalry of the reserve, and engineers. At 1.30, the officers of Canrobert's corps (the 6th), and division of Forton. At 4.15 a train took off the officers of the 2nd Corps (Frossard's), and the brigade Lapasset; and at 6.15, the 3rd Corps (Lebœuf's). Great consideration was invariably shown by the German authorities for the officers, and careful arrangements were made for the wounded and sick French, chiefly under the supervision of German doctors.

I spent the afternoon of the 31st in inspecting, so far as time would permit, the fortifications of the town of Metz, and those constituting its exterior defences. What I had already gathered concerning the natural and artificial strength of the forts of St. Quentin, St. Julien, Plappeville, St. Eloy, and Queleu I found more than borne out by personal investigation. Whoever holds Metz holds an impregnable fortress. Nothing can so much as get at the fortress of Metz proper while the outworks hold out, and there is no reason that, properly garrisoned and provisioned, they should not hold out for ever. It might be possible to batter down St. Eloy or Queleu, the others cannot be got at advantageously in any way on account of the strength of their natural

position. The weak point of the fortress is towards the east, between Queleu and St. Julien; but the complement of the defence on that side is made up by the "provisional" earthwork of les Bottes. From what I heard I think it probable that the day after the 14th of August, the Germans, if they had made a dash, and had been prepared for severe losses, might have effected a lodgment in front of Fort Belle Croix in this direction, and, indeed, if all tales were true, might have pushed their way into the town itself. We all know how easy it is to be wise after the event. The English army in the Crimea was abused for not going straight into Sebastopol two days after the Alma, instead of sitting down on the bleak plateau over against the fortress. Had its leaders known the state of the fortifications, no doubt the weary winter and the heaps of dead might have been spared to Britain. So with the Germans before Metz. I was assured that so confident were the French of success—so ridiculous did they think the idea that it was possible to invest Metz—that it was not till after the battle of Forbach that serious efforts had been made to place the fortress in an efficient state of defence. The guns were not mounted till then behind the embrasures. Les Bottes was unfinished—a mere heap of shapeless earth. Even now it was not properly finished, and looked as slovenly a piece of fortification work as I ever saw put out of hand by troops who asserted they had engineers in their

ranks. Nevertheless, it had a front, and guns mounted on that front. The Germans, ever masterful and prompt, would not, I was satisfied, delay long to alter les Bottes from a "provisional" into a permanent fort. Subsequent events bore out this anticipation; and, with their efficient and thorough system of administration, Metz, if impregnable hitherto, will be henceforth, if such a thing can be, doubly impregnable.

From what I learned, there had been a good deal more of huckstering than patriotism among the civilian population of Metz. There was a reason for the *émeute* on the evening of the 28th. The wily burghers had been keeping back their stores for a market, while their poorer fellows hungered because of the high prices, and the army starved. Horses were dying daily for want of forage; yet the Germans found stores of hay and corn quietly stowed away in unlikely places. It was the same with other articles of consumption, and the administration seemed to have been either not strong enough or not cunning enough to make everything forthcoming for the common good. Napoleon called us a nation of shopkeepers, but I take leave to doubt whether our shopkeepering idiosyncrasy would have developed itself in such a manner. I could not help having a quiet chuckle at the douce burghers, whose market Bazaine had spoiled. How they hated him for it! And they spoke their minds right venomously after the French manner.

If one listened to all he heard, he was bound to accept the conclusion that Bazaine was a renegade and traitor of the largest possible calibre. It seemed, according to the gossip of the natives, savage that their canny little scheme for putting money in their purses had failed, that Bazaine nourished the design of having himself declared Regent of France, and that he only relinquished this ambitious project for the consideration of a fabulous subsidy, contributed I could not exactly learn by whom. It was useless to point out to the angry and disappointed cits that on the face of it this was rubbish, and that Bazaine kept his upper lip straight and his face to the foe so long as, and indeed longer than, he had an army capable of fighting, marching, or standing up to be shot down. If he had had subordinates honest and capable of co-operating with him, had he been unfettered at the outset, and had the discipline and *moral* of his army not been deteriorated before he took the command of it, it might have been that the chroniclers of this war would have had a different tale to tell.

It was with a deep interest that I listened at the table d'hôte the same evening to the despondent remarks of a venerable French gentleman, who had been a colonel at Waterloo. The old man had the water in his eyes as he spoke of the depreciation in the character of the forces of his country. The cause that had wrought the curse of deteriorated discipline was, according to him, the per-

nicious itch for popularity with which all the French superior officers were bitten. Canrobert, he told me, had been the great initiator of this popularity-hunting fever. In his rough, bluff way he used familiarly to appeal to the private soldiers as "his children" whether their rations were what they liked, and if an ill-conditioned fellow, thus encouraged, vented a grumble, he would turn on the colonel and blow him up sky-high. One very pregnant observation he made, a remark which I had thought of all the evening, and doubly significant as coming from a Frenchman and an officer. "Surely," said I, "this will bring the French to their senses, and we must have peace in a very short time. And just as surely that peace," I continued, "must be a permanent one, for the French army, with all its craving for *la gloire*, must realise the fact that there is not much in the way of *la gloire* to be got by being greedy for the Rhine."

"I don't know," said the old man, mournfully. "Logically you are right, no doubt; but severe as the lesson has been, I question of its effect. It is the officers of the French army who chiefly are the clamourers—senseless and frothy clamourers—after *la gloire*. They shrieked for war, enervated with lust and absinthe as they were, ignorant of their duties, their minds uncultivated, and debilitated with luxury. I fear they are too far gone, too utterly vitiated and emasculated mentally, to be able to draw the conclusion from the premises; and

I should not be surprised if, a year hence, you may hear the parole loafers who are swinging about the streets to-day, yelling for war again, as unprepared to pursue it to success as they were when this one was entered into, and as reckless and regardless of consequences as they were then and are now."

Just conceive what France must have come to when one of her *anciens militaires* could speak thus! That the officers of his army were, in his opinion, so utterly spineless as to be unable to recognise the fact that they had been beaten, the causes which had led to their defeat, and the utter impossibility that unless they purged and lived cleanly they could make even a fair fight of it against the cool-headed and heavy-handed German! The whirligig of time brings round many curious changes, but it is utterly outside the nature of things that Frenchmen as they are, as I saw them in this war from day to day, can ever, given what advantages they may, be a match in warfare for a people so constituted as those which dwell in the Vaterland. The hot iron of adversity brands deep, and has a wonderful power to cure ailments, but if the surface is so calloused that the iron will not mark, how can the beneficial result be achieved?

The old gentleman was specially severe on the Zouaves. When these regiments were first constituted, he said the ranks were really full of fighting men. But as their fame grew they became fashionable, and then their ruin set in.

The ranks were crowded by young sprigs who had no other thought than a picturesque uniform, waxed moustaches, the demi-monde, and absinthe; and the once stout and capable regiments had lost their prowess and become enervated and flaccid. This view may be exaggerated—the *ancien militaire* of the table d'hôte was not the first man that ever put forth the opinion that "the service is going to the dogs, by Gad;" but it is in a measure confirmed by the events of this war, in which the French infantry of the line displayed far greater valour and patient endurance than the pet regiments.

One might have been surprised on entering Metz for the first time since the capitulation how little sickness was apparently existing in the town. One strolled on to the Place Royale, and there saw the streets of railway waggons, which in the early days had been brought into the town from the station—300 of them—and diverted from the carriage of luggage or merchandise to be hospitals for the reception of the sick and wounded. Here and there a convalescent limped about on crutches, or a pallid-faced man glided past, from whom you instinctively shrank with a curious feeling that the taint of the fever must be hanging about him still. But of sweeping pestilence there seemed no traces. One had to look for the deadly sickness in quiet corners in the little improvised hospitals, where there were only a few cases, or in the neglected villages around the town where hygiene had been com-

paratively neglected. There it was and there alone, where you could find forms which you were told were those of men, but passed out of all recognition as such, discoloured and bloated in the last stages of the foul black small-pox. It might be that you chanced on a lazarette into which the terrible demon of hospital gangrene had entered and fixed his relentless fang, never to be withdrawn till the earth should have been heaped on his victim. A few cases of this terrible disorder, and only a few, I saw. Not alone was the sense of sight called into requisition; no cordial in Metz seemed to have the virtue of washing the horribly fœtid odour out of my throat, where it stuck as if it were something solid. I trust no reader will ever be called to look upon the corpse of one who has died of pyæmia. One took his life in his hand going among such spectacles. Here is a house in the Isle de Saulcy in which there are five sick men and two corpses. There is a doctor with them—a lone man, for the very women, with their tender hearts hardened by the terror of the dread infection, have run away. The doctor is a mere youth in years, but there is grey already in his hair, and he tells me that the last six weeks have made him feel as an old man. With every breath he inhales he risks his life nearly as much as if he held his fist into the cage of a cobra capella. What words can describe the colour of these semicomatose forms which he handles so tenderly? Have they been blown up in an

explosion, and had their skins dusted over to ease the smart of the burn, and to hide the swarthy brand of the powder? No, they are the victims of a far worse misfortune. They lie smitten to the marrow with the terrible *Typhus exanthematicus*, the floury typhus, which is happily so rare that many a respectable and capable general practitioner in Britain has never heard of it. The flour which the exanthematicus powders on the skin of its victim, seldom washes off. Almost invariably face and flour dust are alike hidden in the grave.

The railway station outside the Porte Serpenoise of Metz was a curious sight. It was the depôt of all the vast train of that Corps-Francs organized by the Chemin de fer de l'Est, with a military constitution, and having a material that had cost fifteen millions of francs. The corps numbered 1200 men, and they, with all their material, their bridges, their stalls, their waggons, their pontoons, and their vast timber blocks, were destined to act as the pioneers of the French army on its march "à Berlin," and to repair the damage to the communications wrought by the Germans, falling back beaten and demoralised across the Rhine on their capital. There was a bridge here in pieces, specially constructed to be thrown across the Rhine. The bridge had never quitted the locality where it was constructed. It was the prize of the army that had not only kept the watch fast and true on the German Rhine, but that was standing sentry on

the Moselle, the Marne, the Seine, and the Loire. And to-day in the drizzle of the small rain, the bold Corps-Francs were slowly jogging it on the prisoner-train towards the Rhine which they had thought to approach in array so different.

Many a day it will take Metz to recover from the handiwork of the men who undertook to defend it. The tourist who in the early summer came to this virgin queen of the Moselle might have noticed outside the fortifications a belt of buildings about half an English mile in breadth. The trim villas of the wealthy citizens had stood here in the dainty gardens; the pretentious house of the mayor had been here behind its red-brick walls. There had been snug little cottages *ornées*, where dwelt ladies, about whose antecedents few knew anything, but who had fair faces and who dressed magnificently. Not one stone now remained upon another of all the villas, the mansions, the cottages. All was blank desolation. Here and there the stump of a fountain, erstwhile standing in a pretty garden, asserted itself disconsolately, its once superincumbent Cupid or Neptune half battered into the mud. The ground was churned into slush by the tread of many footsteps, and fetid odours blew over it from the dead horses that were rotting on its surface. This belt of desolation was the *zone militaire* of Metz—the space outside the fortifications, where buildings were allowed to be erected solely

on the condition that if it should be necessary at any time for military exigencies to destroy them, the owners should not be entitled to claim compensation. The military exigency came in July last, and now the portly mayor might bite his thumb, and the owners of the villas and the cottages grope about the ruins for salvage, for no consolation was forthcoming for them in the shape of compensation.

On the 1st of November I continued my investigations as to the condition of the French sick who had been left by the capitulation as a legacy to the Germans. In those inquiries I derived great assistance from the courteous kindness of Dr. Leithold, of the division of General Kummer, on whom devolved the supervision of all the medical and sanitary arrangements. Dr. Leithold had in all inherited about 19,000 sick men, among whom were included only sixty German prisoners—all the rest were Frenchmen. This included the sick in the field hospitals and the various forts. The diseases chiefly raging were typhus and dysentery, the latter with a strong tendency to assume the phase of the former. There were not many cases, however, of spotted or floury typhus. Small-pox was far from rare, and in not a few cases it was of the most virulent form. A good deal of scurvy was also existing. I fancy that a great quantity of scurvy cases of a mild type had not been allowed to enter the hospitals, for of the prisoners in the

lager by Retonfay I saw a considerable number bearing the evidences of suffering from this disease. With the good and varied rations now being distributed, a disease which had been superinduced by their absence was sure soon to disappear. In order at once to clear for the occupation of troops the barracks in Metz, hitherto used as hospitals, and to provide a change into higher and purer air, all the sick able to move were being sent out into the highlying forts surrounding the town. This step, it was hoped, would stimulate healthy action in systems which had become low, degenerate, and stagnant, and good nourishment, which was being provided with a lavish hand, would naturally co-operate greatly in the setting up of this healthy action. His Excellency von Kummer deserves to be held in honour by all humanity for the prompt and solicitous arrangements which he caused to be instituted for relieving the pressure on the sick of the pre-capitulation condition of things. A great bakery of white bread was at once set up in the Caserne des Chasseurs, and orders were circulated that all medical officers in charge of lazarettes should have carte blanche to make requisitions for bread. Stores were hurried in of coffee, chocolate, soup extract, and other comforts, and by Sunday morning there were very few sick who were not the better of the advent of the Germans. Prior to the establishment of the regular system of supply, the Berliner Hülfsverein, represented by Herren Adolph Schwabe

and E. Minlos, was, with the English Ambulance, among the first to commence a distribution of comforts. Britons may be glad to know that they too helped towards the Liebesgaben with which were packed the fourgons of the Berliner Hülfsverein, since the British National Society helped its funds with a donation of 1000*l.*, the administration of which was confided to Mr. Schwabe. As General von Senden and his staff entered the town a scene occurred, pathetic enough in one aspect to move the deepest sympathies of those who love the Fatherland and its children, and yet not without a certain grotesqueness that only affords another illustration of the narrow gap which exists between tears and laughter. As the General rode down the Rue de la Prison Militaire, he passed the prison of the Maison d'Arrêt, where the German prisoners taken on the 7th at Maizières were confined. As the Landwehrmen on that day had met the foe with shouts of "Hurrah Preussen!" and "Immer vorwärts!" so now, gaunt, hollow-eyed, and squalid, the great gallant fellows cheered their countrymen as they came on. The cheer was hardly so full-volumed as when it had echoed through the gables of Ladonchamps; scanty rations exclusively of horseflesh were not quite the class of feeding off which to cheer lustily. But von Senden, not unfamiliar with the cheers of his Landwehr men, heard the "Hurrah Preussen!" from behind the bars, and, halting, called out to his Kinder to know how they fared. The

hungry men told their plight, and the general turning to the Intendant who rode behind him, asked when he could have food up for the wants of the prisoned Landwehrmen. "Not for an hour at least," was the reply. Then von Senden turned to Mr. Schwabe, the bearer of the Liebesgaben, and asked whether he could do nothing till the Intendant got up his column. The fourgons of the Berliner Hülfsverein were not a furlong behind, and they came up at the trot. The bread tumbled out of the waggons, and in at the prison windows. But the waggons contained other provender than bread, and the question was asked of the prisoners as they munched their bread, what relish they would have to it. Who that knows the German palate but can anticipate the reply. "Haben Sie Wurst?" was the response, as if from one man, and then from behind came a piping voice, it must have been an epicurean boy who spoke—"Oder Schinken?" Wurst is the German sausage, suggestive to the British mind of trichinæ, and other nameless horrors, but dearer to the German heart than any other edible. Then they got cigars—the prisoners—and von Senden and the Berliner Hülfsverein passed on, the former to take up his headquarters, the latter to distribute their arrowroot, tea, woollen garments, winter beds, biscuits, and what not of Liebesgaben to the wretched French sick.

On returning to the Hôtel de l'Europe, after a round of the hospitals, I found in the *salle* an officer from Retonfay

who had ridden in to tell me that the General in command of the brigade had sent to desire me to call upon him. It was very well calling on generals if one went of his own accord, but a summons to attend was calculated to make one nervous. Had I been writing of the positions without sufficient discretion, I anxiously asked of myself, or had any order been issued to forbid correspondents from frequenting the foreposts? Speculation was useless, and I went straight out in the moonlight tc the big château inhabited by the General, in the outskirts of Retonfay. There was no frown on the features of the gallant old Pole; my portion was a warm grip of the hand, and a cordial salutation. The General, instead of having a wigging for me, wished to ask a favour of the journal I represented. The General's children are half English, his wife is an English lady, and his mother-in-law, who, to judge from the enthusiastic manner in which the General spoke of her, is utterly unlike mothers-in-law in general, had thoughtfully sent her fighting son-in-law a box of concentrated soups all the way from a western suburb of London. The gift had moved the General to tender thanks, if he might, through the columns of an English journal, and to make of the box of soups a peg on which to hang a compliment to the British nation. The General pondered, as he ate his soup, on the form which this communication should take, apologising to me for his silence from the circumstance that he desired "to

make a little wit." When he had got to the salad, he found the spirit move him, and he dictated as follows :— "I thank you, dear grandmamma, for your delicious soups ; the vermicelli and the tail ox are delicious. The North German Ambassador has made a mistake when he said that the English nation has only manifested a warm-heartedness towards the French. As I eat my dinner, I am a witness to the contrary.—Your loving son,—Von Zglinitzki, Major-General." The good General slightly distorted the relation existing between him and the relative he desired to address ; but I supposed he had taken the word from his children.

On the 2nd of November the whole of the 10th Army Corps defiled through Metz on its southward march towards Troyes. Its General, Voight Rhetz, sat in the saddle in the Place Royale, with Kummer beside him, and a background formed of the trucks devoted to hospital purposes. On the other side of the broad thoroughfare stood groups of French officers looking on critically as the men went past with whom they had so often been engaged. To have seen the different regiments pass the saluting point with everything about them as neat as if they had come out of barracks, you would never have thought they could have been doing forepost work and fighting for two months. Fresh, stout, clean, and supple, the great stalwart fellows came past with the German quick step in one long continuous

stream for two hours, and long before all had passed the Frenchmen had sunk into a dull silence that seemed to betoken acquiescence in an inevitable fate. There was no cheering or singing; the bands played as they passed the General, but the "Wacht am Rhein" was kept for the country roads. Besides the 10th, the 3rd Army Corps was on the march for Troyes. The 7th for the present was to remain in Metz; the 2nd had started Paris-ward before the capitulation; and the 1st, after seeing off the last of the prisoners, was destined for the northern march toward Lille and Amiens, along with the 8th Corps. General Kummer, leaving the commandership of the town for an active command, was succeeded by General von Löwenfeld. General Kummer, during his brief tenure of a very difficult and delicate office, had earned a well-deserved popularity. His urbanity and consideration to the French officers were appreciated warmly by them all, and not a few of them referred to the subject in my hearing with deep feeling. I have omitted to mention before, that when the report of the capitulation became spread abroad throughout the army on the evening of the 28th Oct., a great number of regimental officers had a sort of caucus meeting, in which they discussed the matter. Universal indignation at the conduct of Bazaine was expressed, and it having been estimated that the officers present were able to rely on the fidelity of a following of some 25,000 men, it was

resolved that a desperate effort should be made that same night to cut a way through the German lines. The meeting separated, and one of its members came to the Hôtel de l'Europe, where, over a bottle of champagne, he made his last will and testament, and with a tear in his eye, committed it to his friend my informant, and went forth with set teeth on his desperate emprise. Next morning he came back to breakfast, blythe as a bird, and reclaimed his will. It seemed there had been a miscalculation. Instead of the following of 25,000 men on which the officers had relied, they could not get a man to follow them. The realisation of the misconception prevented the attempt being made.

I never tired of passing my time in watching the Place Royale and the Esplanade, on which were quartered the wounded. On the former were the railway car hospitals, on the latter are fine roomy tents, holding twelve men each comfortably. What a variety of mutilations you noticed among the convalescents. Men who had lost a leg, others a foot, others an arm; the gamut of mutilation was run up and down till you almost expected to see a man walking about without a head. It was a listless, weary promenade which these unfortunates executed. Some few formed little groups for conversation, and others made belief to play at a kind of outdoor billiards on a wooden frame on the ground, but most patrolled languidly backwards and forwards, with a

dejected listlessness that was the more painful to witness because it is so un-Frenchlike. I suppose they must have been tired of the promenade at the top of the Esplanade over against the river, for there were seldom more than a few there. And yet the view from it is one of which I think it must take a long time to get weary. If I could think the inhabitants of the Esplanade possessed of so much depth of feeling, I would fain have imagined that they shun the promenade on the ramparts that the sight of so much of beauty lost to France might not wound them too poignantly. Behind, among the tents, are the statues, and the still bright flower-beds. In front, at one's feet, are the outworks, and then the broad stream of the river, with the fertile meadows of Simphorien beyond. On the right, across the stream, is the Isle de Sauley, the island of the weeping willows, with its powder-magazines all but hidden among the graceful willows and the tall poplars. On the left is the citadel, with its green earthworks and glacis, and beyond the beautiful suburb of Montigny, with the bend of the stream farther on ending in the railway bridge, the horizon to the south, bounded by the range of heights, of which the highest is Mont St. Blaise, with its ruined château and the Observatory, from which I had looked down on the plain and city. Over St. Simphorien is the other branch of the Moselle, fringed by the nestling villages of Moulin, St. Ruffine, Ban St. Martin,

and Devant-les-Ponts, wearing a very peaceful aspect but for the absence of smoke from the chimneys. Over them towers abruptly the rugged Mont St. Quentin, with the vineyards on its shoulders, lovingly hugging the white villages, then the bare interval of red scarp, and then the summit, crowned by the great spreading fortress, its warm grey tint brought out in the slanting sunbeams. Well may St. Quentin be called "the eagle of Metz," soaring over the valley, as it does, up in the very sky. Alas! for France and Metz, the wings of the eagle were shorn. On its ramparts there was an eagle still, it is true, but it was the eagle on the helmet of the Prussian sentry, who as he paused in his beat, and looked down on what a week before deserved the name its inhabitants so fondly gave it, "La Pucelle," may be trying how he can adapt the German song, "Oh Strassburg, oh Strassburg, Du wunderschön stadt," to the new conquest. Verily, it is a wonderful city, a city for the possession of which to stake everything and to fight to the last man and the last ditch. Now that the German army had seen it—few who have not studied him know what an instinctive eye the German soldier has for the beauties of nature—he would not be a discreet man who should have suggested that the prize should be let slip. Nothing so much strengthened Bismarck's hand in his demand for Lorraine, as the opportunity the German army had for seeing and admiring Metz.

The very heavens seemed to smile on the capture of la Pucelle. For days before Bazaine had sent in his capitulation it had seemed as if a repetition of the deluge of Noah was in progress. All the low country was inundated; where the waters had not yet reached, the ground was a thin, spongy, quagmire of mud. On the day that the Germans marched in and the French marched out, the heavens still wept copiously, as if in lamentation over a spectacle so full of woe for France. But when the German sentry had taken his post on the gates, and when the black and white flag floated out over the huge brown works of Plappeville, out came the sun in a joyous radiance. As if by magic, the waters abated. On St. Simphorien, where but the day before the dove could have found no rest for the sole of her foot, an army might now have manœuvred. The mud dried up, and the roads become hard again—those wonderful roads that stubbornly resisted deterioration by the grinding wheels of the cannon and proviant columns, and which ought of themselves to prevent the name of the Third Napoleon, their constructor, from being held in execration by the French. Under the bracing influence of the bright sun and the frosty wind, everybody and everything seemed to regain cheerfulness. The French prisoners yet remaining in Retonfay had somehow got the mud off their clothes, and with the mud had gone the moodiness. The German troops had heel-balled the eagle on their

helmets, and polished after a fashion the long boots that for days before had been caked with successive layers of mud. The townspeople, in all their sullenness, felt and yielded to the influence of the fine weather. The ladies of the place, of whom hitherto we had only caught glimpses as a pretty face peered out from behind a window-blind, came out into the streets, and tripped along, daintily booted and delicately gloved, among the dashing German subalterns, who might have been excused for glances of undisguised admiration, and among the throng of common soldiers, who seemed unimpressible, but were as courteously civil as if they had served an apprenticeship as masters of the ceremonies. Metz seemed to have no objection to any amount of what it no doubt considered the mammon of unrighteousness in the shape of Prussian thalers. All the shops were open, and had got stocked with a rapidity that might have been accounted for either by concealed stores or by wonderful enterprise in getting supplies speedily from Saarbrück or Nancy. The cafés swarmed with German officers, with French officers, with French civilians. It was already two days since the departure of the last train had been notified for the conveyance of French officers to Germany, but there must still have been close on 1800 of them left in Metz. I suppose the greater proportion of them must have been on the sick or convalescent list, but I saw comparatively few who

appeared seriously ailing. The diverse propensities of the two armies in the matter of drinking could be seen at a glance by a visit to a café. The German officer, trim, neat, buttoned up to the throat, dressed as regimentally as if on parade, and with a carriage that might suggest his having swallowed a ramrod, entered, saluted the room all round with a stiff-necked bow and a chink together of his spurred heels; then stalked to a seat, and called for a "Glas Bier." The French officer, his frogged and furred undress pilot coat open at the throat, and showing a slice of shirt-collar and of front—a dickey, for aught I know—and with the invariably white or brightly-coloured cravat, thrown loosely round his neck, lounged in with his hands in his pockets, nodded to a friend, tumbled in a heap on to a settee—if he ever swallowed a ramrod the gastric juice must have made pulp of it long ago—and called for a *petit verre* of cognac or absinthe. He took his tipple neat, fiery as it is. As the German plunged his moustache into the froth of his beer flagon, he gave one the idea that he was drinking because he had thirst and wanted to quench it. It was impossible to think the same of the Frenchman as he took a sip out of the little glass, and rolled the spirit round his mouth and under his tongue with as much gusto as if it had been a sin.

As I was strolling on the Esplanade, on the morning of the 4th, I met a comfortable-looking old gentleman, in gaiters and woollen gloves. A remark as to the scenery

served as a mutual introduction, and he told me he was an old officer of artillery who, during the greater part of the siege, had held the position of Commandant of Fort Queleu, and who, when capitulation seemed imminent, had returned to the civil life, out of which the siege had temporarily called him, so as to escape expatriation as a prisoner of war. The good old gentleman spoke very frankly as to the events of the siege, and had no hesitation in speaking his mind as to Marshal Bazaine, and the motives by which, from first to last, he had been actuated. When the Army of the Rhine first fell back around the fortifications of Metz, after the battle of the 18th of August, instead of making efforts which he thought undoubtedly would have been successful, to push onward for a junction with the rest of the French forces, Bazaine's explanation to his principal officers for his policy was to the effect that the forts of Metz were in a defensive condition so backward that he dared not, consistently with his duty to France and his impression as to the importance of Metz as the premier fortress of the Empire, abandon it in its then inchoate condition to a defence to be carried on solely by its garrison. In this view the commander of Fort Queleu declared that he completely coincided. Comparatively trivial efforts would, he believed, have sufficed to reduce Metz immediately after the 18th of August, had there been no army to support the garrison, and to strengthen the

fortifications, and had the Germans taken immediate advantage of the state of weakness. Bazaine, he continued, with a zeal and industry beyond all praise, had put the forts into a state of efficient defence by the end of the month. It was then, according to my informant's views, that his presence for the first time became *de trop* in Metz, and then it was that he ought, with all the vigour he could exert, to have burst through the German cordon and got at large. That he could have done this, whether in prosecution of the temporarily energetic sortie which lasted over two days—31st August and 1st September—in the direction of Nosseville, Servigny, and St. Barbe, or in the better line down the valley of the Moselle, my interlocutor had no doubt; and it is fair to him to mention that I found many German officers who could not conscientiously differ from this view. After the middle of September, however, Bazaine's position, in view of breaking-out tactics, had become hopeless. Sickness was decimating his ranks; his troops had already eaten deep into the means for transporting artillery and train. I asked the old commandant how, in his opinion, it was that Bazaine did not strike a decisive blow for extrication after his presence in Metz for good had ceased. The reply, to my thinking, was very pregnant. Bazaine, a capable general, a gallant man, and a sincere patriot, hung balanced between two stools. Instead of looking with a single eye to his duties as a

military commander, he became distracted with political complications. In the early days he was studying the interests of the Emperor, and the means of conserving for Imperialistic uses the army under his command. Later on, the poison of personal ambition had impregnated the system of the hitherto straightforward soldier. He had nourished dreams of seeing himself Regent of France, and made ducks and drakes of his reputation without attaining the personal *quid pro quo* he hankered after.

What a strange kaleidoscopic scene in those early post-capitulation times did the great room of the Hôtel de l'Europe present from day to day! Yesterday it had been thronged by officers of the 7th Army Corps; to-day it was the 8th; on the morrow it would be the turn of the first to snatch a glass of the "sparkling" before the route is taken for the champagneless villages on the line of march. As I sit in my quiet corner, there comes clinking and clattering in a divisional staff; hussars blue, hussars green, hussars red, hussars brown, and hussars black—the last with the grinning death's head and the crossed thigh-bones in silver on the busbies. All are speaking at once, most at the top of their voices, and the clamour is for champagne, of which 400 bottles were drunk in one day in the room in which I sit. If I had the portrait edition of the *Almanach de Gotha*, I might identify the bearers of some of the proudest names in the Fatherland; for the wearers of the showy

uniforms are many of them princes and poins. Of Grafs and Freiherrs, the crop is too large to take any account of. This young slip of a lad with the pale face and the slight moustache is of the blood royal of Russia, and not many removes off the throne of the Czar. He is studying the art of war, attached to the staff of General Manteuffel. If grim Nicholas—he of the Roman nose and strong jaw—were alive to-day, with what interest would he be watching this contest, and how searching would be his questioning of his young kinsman on his return to the banks of the Neva! Who is this straight, square man, stiff of figure and massive of head, that comes quietly into the room alone? All rise respectfully as the door frames, as in a picture, that powerful figure. The sparse hair on the face is but slightly grizzled; surely the man with the few medals on his broad breast, and the simple General's star at his button-hole cannot be a personage of great distinction. You may search in vain the roll of the German army to find a name more honoured or more deserving of honour. The big quiet man is General von Göben, the commander of the 8th Army Corps, the youngest commander of an army corps in the Prussian service, the one who has seen the most fighting. So gluttonous is he for fighting, that when there was peace within the borders of the Fatherland this modern Bayard was fighting in the fierce internal strifes of Spain. In this war he has borne the brunt of the hardest fighting.

At Spicheren he had relieved Kamecke of the command; on the rugged slope of Gorze, and in the thickets of the Bois des Genivaux, he saw full many of his Rhinelanders go down. Von Göben seats himself beside a burly officer with a bushy beard, clad in the white and green of the Cuirassiers. The pallor of the big officer's face contrasts markedly with his jetty beard. Well may he be pale. A furrow of that field at the north of Vionville soaked in not a little of his blood as he lay there on the night of the 16th of August, a chassepot ball in his chest and a sword-cut across that hard, bullet head of his. It was he who led the Cuirassiers, diminished from a strong regiment to a weak squadron in that last death-charge against the French battery. He took the cigar out of his mouth to shout the "Vorwärts," and then sat down in his saddle and spurred the big bay into a charging gallop. It was his luck and his hard head, he tells you, that pulled him through when so many of his brother officers fell to rise no more. And now he is a Rittmeister, no less, and has a good chance of the order *pour merite*. At a side-table there sit together an Oberst of reserve Uhlans, and a quiet little officer in a general's uniform. The chubby Oberst ought to have an army corps at least, if, indeed, he should not supersede von Moltke, to judge of the energetic and fluent manner in which he is demonstrating how a battle should be won to the quiet little taciturn man beside him, who has a

queer half comical look in those grey eyes of his. The Oberst is, to use a vulgar phrase, teaching his grandmother to suck eggs. The little General commands a division, and has before to-day directed the operations of an army. He is the author of a standard work on military strategy; whereas the Oberst for the last dozen years has been tilling his acres away in Pomerania. Nearer to me is a group of subalterns of a Hohenzollern regiment, the youngsters drinking Rhine wine when all others in the room are votaries of champagne. The Hohenzollerns affect "a deep deep draught of the good Rhine wine," for they are a Rhineland Regiment, and it has always been a regimental tradition to stick to the Rudesheim. In the group is a blithe young face I know right well. Many a hearty clink of glasses has passed between us, not a few mornings have we patrolled together the fore-posts in the valley on the French side of Saarbrück. Under the silky moustache you may faintly trace two slight weals. How they came there is a story. The lad was among the foremost up the steep of the Spicheren-berg. So difficult was the climb that he had to take to his hands and knees, and, as you may see a butcher do, he stuck his sword between his teeth. Like a silly fellow, he turned the edge inwards instead of outwards, and when, after his manner, he took to roaring "Vorwärts,' the keen blade enlarged the naturally by no means diminutive orifice of his mouth. At another table sits

Kummer, the chief of the Landwehr men, with a certain Landwehr, fatherly look about himself. In the corner opposite me is the sole group out of uniform. Two are the almoners of the Berliner Hülfsverein, the third is Professor Kollmann, of Munich, who has thrown aside the toga and the doctor's cap to take the charge of a lazarette. The fourth is, what think you?—a lady. In the military history of Europe the name of von Alten is not unknown to fame. It can be unfamiliar to no student of Waterloo literature. The male von Altens of to-day are all soldiers, and the lady at the table with the Professor is their sister, and a sick nurse in an hospital at Chalons. In the salons of Berlin there was no fairer face than that of Agnes von Alten; now the salons know it no more; but when the soldier awakes from out of his delirium, or when the chloroform-influence leaves him after an operation, he finds her bending over him in tender solicitude. There are those, I fancy, in the gay staff coats at the centre table, who would gladly hail a wound if they could only choose their nurse.

The forenoon of the 5th I devoted to a careful examination of the French line of defence which opposed the German environment on the west. A description of its characteristics may, I fear, be but dull reading, but I do not feel myself entitled on that account to refrain from writing it, looking at the fact that the salient points of this line of defence probably disappeared within a few

weeks after, and that some details with regard to it may not be useless in a humble way to the Alison or the Kinglake of this stupendous war. Crossing the river and the Thionville Railroad, on which a train of repairing materials was moving forward with a tentative slowness that reminded me of a Highland pony's movements in a bog, I traversed a flat expanse of considerable size, which had been occupied as the French Guards' camp, and then passed through Ban St. Martin, noticing on the way the château in which Bazaine had had his headquarters. The abrupt rise of St. Quentin began two steps after I had cleared the lanes of Ban St. Martin. Looking at this hill from where you will, you cannot question its steepness; but how steep it is on the face looking towards the town is only to be appreciated by whoever essays to climb it on a frosty morning, when the air is rarefied, and when the ground has yielded its hardness caused by the frost into superficial slipperiness caused by the sun's heat. There was no road but a faint footpath through the vineyards, which soon broke into what may be called a spray of still tinier tracks, and then utterly disappeared. As I toiled slowly and laboriously up the slippery steep, it became apparent to me that a position such as that of Fort St. Quentin, so advantageous because of its isolation and the great area which its height allows it to dominate, may yet have elements of weakness caused by its very isolation and height.

Looking upward as I clambered, I could see no grim earthworks on the crest, no cannon mouths depressed so as to sweep this ascent. The hill shoulders up very steeply for three-fourths its height, and then "tumbles home" so rapidly to the summit on which stands the fort, that its base, as well as the lower steeps, are protected from the fire of the fort by the convexity of the more upland configuration. This fire could not be brought to bear upon these spaces directly, no matter by what expedient, and if once, therefore, an enemy's force could get across the outside area swept by the guns of the fort, it might nestle snugly, if audaciously, right under the lee of the fortress, keeping itself safe much in the same manner as we read of a nigger sticking on the back of a crocodile while the monster snaps his jaws and lashes his tail to no purpose. All that St. Quentin could do in the way of dislodgment must be by an indirect and plunging fire, and the bay of safety is so close, that its artillery essaying any such fire would have to fire at an elevation closely approaching to the perpendicularly upwards. But a glance backward as one climbs forcibly impresses on one the care and skill with which the several parts of the defence of Metz are made to dovetail one into the other. Where the configuration of the ground draws the teeth of St. Quentin, the bare tusks of the citadel of Metz show themselves dangerously. Its guns look across the Simphorien on to the alluvial plateau of Ban St. Martin

and the lower steeps of Mont St. Quentin, and change the "bay of safety" into a position utterly untenable, while the batteries of Montigny and Longeville, one face pointing up the river, the other athwart it, opposed at once a direct and enfilading fire to any body of troops rash enough to essay the path leading to this same untenable bay of safety. Nor was this all that has been done to guard this access, and to negative the feasibility of this place of lodgment. Out of the round shoulder of Mont St. Quentin, just where the "tumbling home" begins, there rises an abrupt, isolated peak, a kind of junior Mont St. Quentin in itself. On the summit of this Bazaine's engineers had knocked up a hasty, but most useful outwork. A strong loopholed palisading enclosed bomb-proof subterranean quarters for about half a battalion, and there were evidences that on the top of this bomb-proof a couple of pieces of artillery had been mounted. From the slits in the palisading the infantry men standing on the tread could have searched with the muzzles of their chassepots the "bay of safety," while the shells from the depressed pieces of artillery could have torn down through the steeps of the vineyards, or pelted into the pretty châteaux and snug cottages of Ban St. Martin in the level bottom.

Traversing the interval between this useful outwork, and the almost upright substructure of granite blocks which forms the eastern foundation of Fort St. Quentin,

I came upon a deep cutting, crossed by a foot-bridge. At the bottom of the cutting was a railway worked by wire ropes. At the summit of the incline, a little to my right, was the house of the stationary engine that had puffed so assiduously during the siege, but that was now silent and deserted. On the left the track seemed to tumble over a precipice into the valley of the Moselle, near to Longeville—the declivity must in truth be very steep. This line, used for the transport of building materials and munitions of war for Fort St. Quentin, and a continuation of which had performed the same function for Fort Plappeville, was constructed, it may be interesting for railway readers to know, on the same gauge as the well-known Festiniog line. It must have been of extraordinary importance during the building and siege operations. Crossing the flying bridge of the railway, I climbed up on to the plateau on which stands the fort, through a perfect litter of chassepot guns and chassepot ammunitions, which had been strewed there by the French troops to whom the order had been given to lay down their arms within the fortification. I skirted its left, making for the brow of the mount, looking out over against the plateau of St. Hubert and Châtel St. Germain, anxious, as on the morning of the 19th of August I had seen the French army lying on this brow, to see how from it the Prussian position must have appeared.

Fort St. Quentin by no means occupies the whole of the summit of the hill of the same name. It stands on an almost imperceptibly raised space on the extreme verge of the eastern extremity. To the westward extends a rugged flat of about a mile in length, by half as much in breadth. The appearance the hill presents was as if some Titan of old had shaved off flat its pointed top, and then strewed boulders over the surface. These boulders, as well as the space between them, are now covered with a short, half-heathy sward. It was then on this flat that the French had sought refuge when at daylight on the 19th of August we looked out from the miserable bivouac on the blood-stained field of Gravelotte, and saw their white tents between us and the dull heavy mass of Fort St. Quentin, as if for safety they were throwing their bare arms around the protecting fortress. On the flat were yet visible the traces of the trenches they had dug around the tents, and their *al fresco* kitchen fires had left their marks on the sward. I was not a little surprised on pressing forward to the edge of this flat to find its margin bordered by a substantial and systematically constructed entrenchment. This line of entrenchment sprang up the steep side of the hill between the top and the village of Scy, which is just outside its cordon. If constructed at all during the siege, it must have been made in the early days. The face was banked up with an earthen slope now grass grown; inside was the inner

face of an upright wall of stones uncemented by mortar. This entrenchment was regularly constructed with salient and re-entering angles, and with bastion-like projections at intervals, for sweeping the face laterally. Close behind were, at intervals, bomb-proof half-underground constructions for the protection of troops not actually lining the entrenchment, and that it was not meant as a place of occasional resort, but was habitually held by defenders, was evidenced by the durable construction of the kitchens, as well as by other less savoury tokens of the continuous presence of troops. In the rear of the bomb-proofs, at frequent intervals, were the earthworks thrown up for batteries. Encircling, as this entrenchment did, the extreme edge of the plateau, its defenders could look right down into the valley below, as well as across at the lower and less abrupt heights opposite which constitute the fringe of the plateau of St. Hubert; and with proper appliances and moderate determination, could, to all appearance, have prevented anything from living in, much less successfully traversing, that valley, to make an assault. This defence work of the summit of Mont St. Quentin, which may be called the key of Metz, presented an appearance so formidable as to seem almost to reduce into a superfluity the great fort in its rear; although of course the utility of the latter became obvious for all round firing at long ranges in co-operation with the other forts for the protection of Metz. This line ran away, still

as strong as ever, down into the dip between the summit of Mont St. Quentin and the longer hog-backed ridge of Plappeville. As it came on upon the latter, instead of climbing directly up the face and so passing close under the greater fortification, it took a sweep westward, skirting the eminence near its base, and was continued right round to the northern front of Plappeville, putting an effectual check upon any sudden surprise from the Bois de Châtel or the Bois de Saulny.

How deceptive are appearances! From the shattered hamlet of St. Hubert, on the grand chaussée, I had looked over to St. Quentin on the morning of the 19th August, and had thought I could have knocked at the gates of the fort after a short half-hour's walk. Now, looking from St. Quentin to St. Hubert, I could barely see the ruined hamlet, and the poplar trees on the chaussée stood up against the horizon. Yet the distance could not have been so great after all, since a shot from Fort St. Quentin on the morning I refer to had killed two German soldiers mounted at the hamlet on the chaussée. Now on the horizon were visible the long low huts which the Germans had erected as their temporary barracks. Much closer on the left, and near the chaussée, where it passes through Roserieulles on its way into the Moselle valley, I noticed the trim square earthwork, so completely constructed as to have been sodded up with turf, of a German battery. In this battery had stood the

12-pounder guns which had burned the village of Moulin les Metz in the early days of October. What the gunners in St. Quentin were thinking of to allow the erection of this earthwork in such a position I could not comprehend. To pound it to pieces they need scarcely have taken the trouble to elevate the muzzles of the great guns on the top of the casemates. A steady cannonade must have made its construction too arduous for the Germans, not given, save in rare instances, to squander lives wantonly. Nay, more, at a quarter of a mile closer still, at La Maison Blanche, just behind Longeau, there stood an impudent little affair of an improvised battery, thrown up for a few field pieces. I wondered if the gunners there, whose lives were not worth five minutes' purchase had St. Quentin been in earnest to dislodge the cocky little concern, ever sent a six-pound shell flying across the valley at the big guns of the fort, in mere bravado. Quitting the entrenchment, I plunged down the slope, about midway between the villages of Lessy and Scy. Now I was among what had been the French outposts, guarding the country roads and the hill paths. The inartistic character of the field defences, on the French side, surprised me not a little. There was a trench across the path with the earth thrown up on the farther side, and that was all. There was no cover for retreat, there were no means of pouring in a cross fire, there was no continuation of the cordon of entrench-

ment, so as to give cover for a thin line of riflemen connecting the posts. It was the same with the position for a field watch in front of Plappeville, between the entrenchments and the Bois de Châtel. The half-moon ditch and paltry earthen breastwork stood there utterly isolated and disconnected. Under a hot fire from the adjacent wood, no relief could have reached it, nor could its occupants have fallen back on their supports in the inner entrenchments, without ruinous loss. It was another story when, having crossed the bottom, I came upon the German foreposts on the opposite slope. On one side of the narrow path there looked down on me a venomous little work, behind which some half-a-dozen marksmen might have stood. Half-a-dozen paces forward, on the other side, there was a duplicate. It made one uncomfortable, even in the solitude, to move about in the continual consciousness that, look which way one might, there was one of these posts looking one all but full in the face, while at least a couple of others were squinting at one on the flanks. Then right in front came an obstruction of felled trees, then the *chevaux de frise* of vineyard stakes stuck in the ground, and last of all the deep trench across the road, with its substantial parapet running away on either side in an unbroken cordon. It was not one road that was so protected on the German side, but all. A comparison of the field works of the rival armies impressed me, in short, with

the conviction that the French works were constructed by soldiers, the German by engineers; and this surprised me the more, because the engineering ability displayed on the part of the French in the choice of sites for the forts, and in their construction, was of a very high order, an opinion, I am sure, which will be confirmed by our highest military critics.

Hark! I hear the quiet tramp of the German infantrymen marching down the narrow street. It is the 2nd Division of the 1st Army Corps on its way through Metz. Ha! here comes the 45th, fresh, clean, and confident. Can you see any gaps in those dense files of fours, although it was the 45th that furnished the 285 *tapfere Krieger* that lie in one long grave in the quiet garden by Château Gras? No, the depôt of the 45th has given over 1400 recruits to the Regiment which it feeds, and if more are wanted (and more were wanted), I doubt not the depôt is equal to the demand. And here comes the sister regiment of the brigade, the gallant 5th, the blood of whose linesmen ran in the gutters of Servigny in that "Schlacht bei Noisseville" on the afternoon of the 31st August. Here is the dashing Hauptmann, who one night, having sitten a little in the sun before it went down, took it into his head to pay a visit to the fair maidens of Villiers l'Orme. The Hauptmann lost his way, and only found it when he was under the nose of a French field watch. He lost, too, his horse,

and had a night's rest in the open in the vine-berg; but he does not look much the worse for it, does he? Crash! bang! Surely I know that tune! It is the old "Hohenfriedburg." Faugh-a-ballagh there for the fighting 4th. If the obstruction consisted of men with arms in their hands, instead of a posse of *gamins*, the 4th would do their own work in the way of Faugh-a-ballagh. At the head of the brigade rides General Zglinitski, full, let us hope, of "vermicelli and tail ox." He looks quite fresh and rosy. I wish his "grandmamma" could see him as he jogs through the Port de France. Ha! here comes the good Oberst, with the cares of that horrible lager of French prisoners off his mind; and now he is on the road again with a reasonable prospect of a fight. Behind him comes the 1st Battalion, marching splendidly; the houses echo again to their firm tread; and the 2nd Battalion follows, with the portly Mecklenburgher Major at its head, and young von Verzen, his adjutant, by his side. Here comes Puttkamer, "the good old man," as we used to call him, who speaks English with a Scotch accent, because he learnt it from a certain Jessie of northern extraction. What do I hear? Can it be? Yes; it is the familiar, although still far-off, salutation of "Miss Lucy, Lucy Long." Verily there is von Hosius in the flesh, and a good deal of that same, too. At his heels his Scotch terrier "Phipps," and by his side his trusty Fischer,

adept at pantomime and lover of salt herrings. "*Kommen Sie mit?*" is the hearty question that greets me on every side. *Ach nein*, worse luck, old friends. To the 2nd succeeds the Fusilier Battalion, with the stalwart senior Hauptmann at its head, its major is detached on another command. Company after company passes me, the honest Kerle in the ranks grinning a kindly greeting to one who had shared with them their roughs and smooths, chiefly the former, goodness knows, for not a few weeks. Near the tail of all comes the 11th Company, my own, with stately Ertmann marching in its front. There is a little darn on the right breast of his coat; you would scarcely guess, to see his sturdy step and upright carriage, that it marks the spot where entered the bullet that went through him on the 14th of August. *Mein leiber Werth*, best of chums! truest of comrades! Shall we ever meet again, I wonder? And as I live, here is Feldwebel Strauss mended again after that unlucky bullet at the Brewery, and with the company account-book sticking out of his breast as of old. They turn the corner over the bridge, and my Metz friends are out of sight. Good luck and plenty of fighting be their lot wheresoever the fortune of war may carry them, and a glad home-coming when the *Friede* comes at last!

END OF VOL. I.

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